

Crown Prince visits tomb of Queen Mother

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath El Hassan visited on Sunday the tomb of the late Queen Zein, the Queen Mother, on the fourth anniversary of her passing away. They recited verses of the Holy Koran and placed a wreath on the tomb. HRH Prince Mohammad, the King's personal representative, HRH Princess Basma along with Royal family members and senior Royal Court officials visited the tomb.

Jordan Times

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Regent attends Hijri new year celebrations

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal, the Regent, on Sunday sent a cable to His Majesty King Hussein congratulating him on the Hijri new year which falls Monday. The Regent also attended a festival held on the occasion of the Hijri new year. Addressing the audience, he expressed his gratitude for those concerned with science and education. He also called for bridging the gap between the generation of founders and the youth. The festival was organized by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in cooperation with Al al Bayt University at Al Hussein bin Ali Auditorium.

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U.S. mediators hit Israeli hard line in latest mission

TEL AVIV (AFP) — U.S. mediators ran into an Israeli hard line over the key issue of West Bank troop withdrawals as they shuttled Sunday between Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk and Special Middle East Envoy Dennis Ross met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for a second time on Sunday after three hours of talks the previous evening.

But the talks failed to win any progress towards overcoming Mr. Netanyahu's opposition to U.S. proposals for a long-overdue Israeli troop pullback from the West Bank.

In the evening Mr. Ross and Mr. Indyk were to meet in Gaza City with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, whose aides repeated calls for the United States to force Israel to accept its proposals.

The latest U.S. mission aims to pave the way for separate meetings in London between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the two leaders, during which Washington has said it will put its package proposal on the table.

But in a sign of the Israeli government's hard-line, Mr. Netanyahu's officials dismissed the troop pullback issue at the heart of the U.S. package proposal.

Mr. Netanyahu and the U.S. mediators have not yet even begun to tackle the controversial issue of the size of a troop withdrawal. Mr. Netanyahu's press adviser, David Bar-Ilan, said.

"There has been no discussion of numbers per se with the Americans," Mr. Bar-Ilan said.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said U.S. mediators must "first resolve" the issue of Palestinian compliance to a series of Israeli demands over a crackdown on anti-Israeli groups before tackling the withdrawal issue.

He said Washington should instead focus on sealing deals over a series of side issues, particularly the opening of an airport and joint industrial zone in Gaza.

"The top priority of the



NO QUESTIONS: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waves off questions from journalists Sunday as he and U.S. Special Middle East Envoy Dennis Ross (right) head for their second meeting in the Israeli premier's offices after a brief photo-op (Reuters photo)

Netanyahu says if PNA declares a state, it will be another Iraq

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Sunday that "another Iraq" could be created in the Middle East if a Palestinian state is created without Israel's consent.

Speaking on the Fox Television Network, Mr. Netanyahu advised Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat against unilaterally declaring an independent state if the current peace process breaks down once again.

"Our concern is that if something is done to create a Palestinian state, it could turn out to be another Iraq, another Iraq on our doorstep," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"And you can imagine that we feel more than uncomfortable with that unhappy thought."

Mr. Netanyahu was responding to questions about Mr. Arafat's declaration that he may declare an independent Palestinian state if there is no move to final status negotiations by May 4.

"What we want is a negotiated solution that

will give the Palestinians the ability to run their own lives, but none... of the abilities to threaten our lives," Mr. Netanyahu said, adding: "We think such a balance could be struck."

Mr. Netanyahu reiterated that Israel's negotiating stance is based on security considerations. "Suppose you give up... too much land. When you give up too much land, you end up having 40,000 kids who are travelling on the roads of Judea-Samaria, and their bus gets blown up."

"The ticket comes to me. The responsibility is mine," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Meanwhile, senior Palestinian officials in the West Bank warned Sunday that high-level Mideast talks in London next week are a last chance for the peace process and hinted at a resumption of resistance should the meeting fail.

Ahmed Qureia, speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said the planned meeting May 4 between Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. leaders "is the last chance for us to achieve success."

Israelis protest Olmert's proposal to annex suburbs to Jerusalem

TEL AVIV (AP) — Angry Israelis on Sunday disrupted traffic, set tyres alight and threatened to boycott independence day celebrations to protest a proposed annexation of their suburban communities to Jerusalem.

Any change in the status of Jerusalem could upset the fragile Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Israel claims the entire city as its capital, while

the Palestinians want the eastern sector as capital of their future state.

And many of those living on Jerusalem's outskirts said the plan to bring their communities under the municipal umbrella would undermine their suburban and rural lifestyle as well as destroy farmland in the Judean mountains.

Some Israelis have called

for a westward municipal expansion to boost both Jerusalem's Jewish population — more than a quarter of the city's residents are Palestinians — as well as that of secular Jews, offsetting the rapid growth in the population of ultra-religious Jews.

The Jerusalem municipality has said that the

King reiterates call for Israel to 'restart' peace

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — King Hussein called on Israel Sunday to breathe new life into the Mideast peace process before it collapsed, in an interview with a Danish newspaper.

The peace process is "still alive but is close to breaking up", the King told Jyllands-Posten in an interview published on the eve of a three-day official visit starting Monday.

"I hope that Israel will contribute in one way or another to achieving the progress which is so badly needed," he said.

The King, who spoke of his disappointment at the continuing stalemate after a meeting earlier this month with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the prospect of peace was bleak.

He said he would be discussing the situation with Danish Premier Poul Nyrup Rasmussen during his stay. King Hussein and Queen Noor are the guests of Danish sovereign Queen Margrethe.

'Arab countries approaching poverty line for water'

CAIRO (AFP) — The population explosion in the Arab World is setting the stage for a regional water crisis by 2030, Egyptian Water Resources Minister Mahmoud Abu Zeid said Sunday.

"The Arab World is facing a water crisis because of demographic growth which is increasing consumption of resources already in short supply," he told the government newspaper Al-Ahram.

"In 2030, Arab countries will be confronted by grave crises in the potable water supply because the sources are outside their borders," he warned at a conference on Arab water opened here Sunday.

He said "the water resources of 22 Arab states do not exceed 150 billion cubic metres, of which 60 per cent originates outside" their borders. "The annual per capita portion of water for Arabs will fall from the current 1,500 cubic metres to less than 750 cubic metres in 2030 because the number of Arab citizens will increase from 250 million to 600 million by then," he said.

Regent calls on scholars to help activate joint Arab action

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal, the Regent, called Sunday for the tackling of critical causes facing the Arab World in a serious and objective manner, stressing the need for Arab scholars and research centres as well as universities to support Arab stands and proposals such as the issue of refugees.

In the concluding session of the meetings of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), the Regent called for making clear the Arab stand towards violence and terrorism on

the basis of the Islamic and Arab codes of conduct.

The Crown Prince underlined "the importance of giving due concern to the world around us in order to develop our capabilities for serving Arab interests."

He also emphasised the need for providing the media with the latest Arab studies and researches and "to bridge the gap between fathers and sons which is probably more important than the gap between the decision-makers and scholars."

The Regent called for exploiting the youth ener-

gies and potentials and to involve the youth in the decision-making process.

Prince El Hassan pointed out that the ATF groups the elite Arab scholars and intellectuals who represent most of the political schools in the Arab World.

He underlined the importance of "calm diplomacy and constructive dialogue so as to fight several economic and political challenges facing the Arab World," noting that "Arab scholars can activate Arab joint action through giving focus to issues of common interest."

Iraq says threats over U.N. sanctions serious

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq on Sunday again demanded an end to U.N. trade sanctions against it and said Iraqi statements that its foes would pay a heavy price if they were maintained should be taken seriously. Iraqi Culture and Information Minister Humam Abdul-Khaleq Abdul-Ghafur said Monday's U.N. Security Council talks in New York on U.N. arms inspections in Iraq over the last six months should focus only on lifting the embargo.

"The world and all the just people in it, if they want the relations between Iraq and the Security Council and the [U.N.] Special Commission to stabilise on a basis of justice, they should immediately deal with the issue of the embargo seriously," Mr. Abdul-Ghafur said.

"They should take seriously the statements issued by the Revolutionary Command Council, the Iraqi leadership [of the Baath Party] and the cabinet, and nothing else," he added in a statement carried by the official Iraqi News Agency (INA).

Mr. Abdul-Ghafur said visits by U.N. weapons inspectors to Iraq's so-called eight presidential sites — the focus of a recent crisis with the United Nations — showed that no banned weapons were hidden there.

The visits ended on April 3 and were carried out under a deal signed with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Feb. 23 which defused the crisis and averted a U.S. military strike against Iraq.

On Thursday, Iraq's cabinet said after a meeting

chaired by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that Baghdad's enemies would pay a heavy price if the sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait were allowed to drag on.

The cabinet said the world had two options: either lifting the embargo or maintaining it, adding the first choice would lead to some sort of relationship and understanding while the second would prompt a "new state of affairs."

On Saturday a government newspaper said Iraq insisted on breaking the embargo this year if the United Nations did not lift it.

The Security Council is due to discuss on Monday a bi-annual report by Richard Butler, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli army destroys Bedouin camp near site of West Bank shooting

HEBRON (AFP) — The Israeli army has destroyed five Bedouin tents near the site of the fatal shooting of a Jewish settler, an Israeli army spokesman said Sunday.

The Bedouin had erected the tents "illegally on domain land" between the Jewish settlements of Maon and Sussia to the south of this southern West Bank

town, the spokesman said.

But the spokesman said that no action had been taken against two caravans Jewish settlers had illegally installed in the same area.

The army had issued an order not to build on the site, but had limited its action to negotiations with the Maon settlers, the spokesman said.

The settlers installed the

caravans with a view to creating a new district of their settlement following the death of a Jewish settler last Sunday.

The settler was killed and a Palestinian severely wounded when a group of Palestinians from the nearby town of Yatta tried to enter the Arab land which the settlers had seized to install the caravans.

Israel at 50: Israelis have never been more divided

By Howard Goller
Reuters

TEL AVIV — Israel celebrates half a century of statehood this week facing a battery of heavy-weight U.S. envoys aiming to push it closer to its founding dream of peace with its Arab neighbours.

U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, whose country has remained Israel's closest ally since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, arrived on Saturday to launch yet another bid to achieve the goal.

His aim: to get Israelis and Palestinians to take another incremental step towards their self-imposed deadline for a final peace deal 53 weeks away.

Fifty years ago this Thursday Israel's founders led by David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister, signed a declaration of independence.

The document offered "peace and good neighbourliness" to neighbouring Arab states and their peoples.

Israel has since made peace with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan

in 1994 and sealed interim deals with the Palestinians starting in 1993. It remains formally at war with Syria and Lebanon.

A final peace with the Palestinians, occupants of the same land until Israel's establishment on parts of what had been British-mandated Palestine, remains elusive.

While Israelis celebrate in ceremony and song, Mr. Ross, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk and U.S. Vice President Al Gore will be in the region trying to coax Israeli and Palestinian leaders to end their deadlock.

Peace talks have been in crisis for more than a year over the issues of Jewish settlement expansion, charges of lax Palestinian handling of Islamists and a row over the size of a long-delayed Israeli transfer of more land to Palestinian rule.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is at odds with the United States and Palestinians over a proposal that Israel hand over another 13 per cent of the West Bank.

He is also threatening to

annex parts of the West Bank if Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, meant to be his peace partner, carries out a vow to unilaterally declare an independent state in 1999 in the absence of a final peace deal.

The United States has played down any expectations of a breakthrough in the 10 days of mediation culminating in London on May 4 when U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will meet both Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu — separately.

The two men have not seen each other since they met seven months ago at the Israel-Gaza border. The meeting ended after two-and-a-half hours with neither of them speaking to reporters.

Israel launches its 50th anniversary festivities with a torchlight ceremony and the blowing of rams' horns in Jerusalem after sundown on Wednesday night.

On Thursday, Israeli forces will stage fly-pasts, naval shows and parachute jumps before the celebrations climax

with a "jubilee bells" extravaganza at a Jerusalem stadium. Despite the positive spin — the jubilee theme song is about "togetherness" — Israelis are anything but united at 50.

An opinion poll for the Maariv newspaper last week showed Israelis as divided today as they were on election day in 1996 when Mr. Netanyahu defeated then Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres by less than one per cent of the vote.

The new poll showed Mr. Netanyahu, a right-winger who reluctantly inherited the peace deals from Mr. Peres's government, tied with the new Labour Party leader, former army chief Ehud Barak. Both have the support of 40 per cent of voters.

The divisions left and right are given further expression in this 50th anniversary week. Demonstrators from Israel's Peace Now movement, picketing the prime minister's residence where Mr. Netanyahu met Mr. Ross on Saturday night, held up posters depicting the Israeli leader in diapers



Peace Now activists demonstrate in front of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence, holding placard showing Netanyahu strangling a dove which symbolise the peace process Sunday (AFP photo)

strangling a dove of peace.


On independence day, right-wingers who support Mr. Netanyahu plan a demonstration by the thousands at Galil Abu Ghneim, the Jewish settlement at the heart of the Middle East peacemaking crisis. They hope to pressure Mr. Netanyahu to accelerate construction.

But Ze'ev Chafetz, columnist for the Jerusalem Report magazine, said outsiders were wrong

to see the divisions as a sign that Israelis feel they have nothing to extol.

He said most would celebrate independence day the way they always do — at the beach, at a barbecue or in the synagogue.

"Maturity, and not malaise, is the reason that people aren't fired up by the official jubilee festivities," he wrote. "Most Israelis are very proud of this remarkable country and not a few of us are in love with it."



ARAB BANK

On the occasion of

AL-HIJRA YEAR

Arab Bank is honoured to convey to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to the

Arab & Islamic nations

its most cordial wishes and greetings

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran has described the Israeli initiative as a "trick" to divert public attention away from the deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

By Michel Ledercq
Agence France Presse

UNITED NATIONS — The first 50 years of Israel's relations with the United Nations have been tumultuous — frequently marked by mistrust and sometimes open hostility.

Ironically the founding act of the state of Israel came here on Nov. 29, 1947, during a stormy session of the U.N. General Assembly which voted, despite fierce opposition from Arab members, to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states.

That vote led to the establishment of Israel five and a half months later.

But relations between the Jewish state and the international organization have always been difficult.

"Relations between Israel and the U.N. have always been tense and this goes back to the birth of Israel," said Arthur Berger of the American Jewish Committee.

The General Assembly, dominated by non-aligned countries that mostly support the Palestinian cause, has voted on many occasions to condemn Israel for various policies; these have largely been ignored by Israel.

In a recent action, 120-member states voted to denounce Israel's policies allowing Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and Arab east Jerusalem. Only the United States and Micronesia opposed the resolution.

The most bitter pill for Israel was probably the 1975 resolution calling Zionism "racist and imperialist."

This resolution was a "humiliating slap in the face," according to Israeli parliamentary leader, Dan Tichon.

The symbolic measure was revoked in 1994 as part of the move toward Arab-Israeli peace discussions.

Still, Israel believes it has been treated poorly by the United Nations, which may explain why successive Israeli governments have refused to allow U.N. involvement in the peace process.

"Over the years, the most unjust is that Israel is the only member of the U.N. which has never been a member of a regional group. Therefore Israel is unable to qualify for a rotating seat in one of the major U.N. bodies like the Security Council," said Mr. Berger.

"History has shown us that the U.N. has been less than objective."

But a U.N. official who declined to be identified said relations between the organization and Israel have improved since Kofi Annan became secretary general in 1997.

Mr. Annan flew to Israel earlier this year and met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which may signal a new start in U.N.-Israeli relations.

"Relations are better now than they have been in the past," the official said.

This apparent rapprochement has worried Arab countries. This was in evidence when Mr. Annan gave a relative endorsement of Israel's conditional offer to withdraw forces from southern Lebanon.

Backers of Israel say, however, it is high time the United Nations make amends.

"There's still a lot of things which have to change in the U.N. system, but when you have leadership that is willing to admit the mistakes of the past, I think it is on the right track."

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli state agency announced Sunday that it would publish for the first time a list of 1,836 unclaimed parcels of land in Israel owned by presumed victims of the Holocaust.

The land was sold prior to World War II to European Jews in an effort to attract immigrants and raise funds and is now worth tens of millions of dollars, said Shlomi Kravitz, head of the Jewish National Fund which manages the properties.

"We are soon going to publish the names of the property owners in the newspapers and distribute the list through Jewish organisations worldwide," Mr. Kravitz said on Israel Radio.

Mr. Kravitz acknowledged that the Jewish National Fund "has shown some negligence over the years" in trying to track down the owners of the land or their descendants.

He said the agency, which manages the state lands which make up most of Israel, was pushed into action by the decision last year by Swiss banks to publicise the names of dormant account holders.

"If the goys [non-Jews] can take this kind of initiative, it would be immoral to say the least for us not to follow suit," he said.

Last autumn, names of property owners who were presumed to have disappeared during the war in Europe were released. In 1995, Swiss banks announced they would publish the names of dormant Nazi-era accounts.

PROGRAMME TWO

DEPARTURES

06:45	Beirut (RJ)
11:45	Frankfurt, London (RU)
12:20	Amsterdam, Chicago (RU)
12:45	Kuwait (RJ)
13:00	Aqaba, Milan (add) (RJ)
13:15	Cairo (RJ)
21:40	Damascus (RU)
21:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:15	Dubai Muscat (RJ)
23:40	Sana'a (RU)
Other Flights	
06:15	Istanbul (TK)
06:35	Larnaca (CY)
07:30	Paris (AF)
08:20	London (AF)
08:45	Beirut (ME)
11:30	Cairo (MS)
15:00	Bahrain (GF)
15:50	Vienna (OS)
16:30	Doha (QR)
16:45	Istanbul (SD)
20:45	Dubai (EK)
23:10	Tel Aviv (LY)
23:15	Thartoum (SD)
02:30	Amsterdam (KL)
Royal Wings (RW)	
08:00 (RW)	Aqaba (from Marka Airport)
20:45	Tel Aviv (from QALA) (RW)
21:30	Aqaba (from QALA) (RW)

AMMAN (Reuters) — HRH Crown Prince Faisal Hassan bin Talal, the Regent, sent a cable Sunday to South African President Nelson Mandela congratulating him personally and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on the country's national day.

German standards expert inspects RSN facility

AMMAN (UPI) — An American assessor from the German Calibration Service (DKS) visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) over the past days to make the final technical assessment needed for granting international accreditation to the National Calibration Laboratory at the RSS Education, Services and Training Centre in the field of BP technology, according to an RSS press release. The assessor, Dr. Sigmund, expressed his satisfaction with the facility and said the laboratory will be recommended for international accreditation by the DKS laboratory.

SS, Yemeni ministry
in cooperation
reerment

SAY Petrochemical Agreement was signed today between the Soviet Scientific Society (VSES) and the German Ministry of Energy and Electricity. The agreement aims to increase bilateral cooperation in making use of energy.

charges nine
 murder, other
 nes

MAN (L.T.) — The Security Court judged nine persons on Monday with involvement in a number of murder, robbery, racketeering, and kidnapping cases.

**what's
going on**

**CANDINAVIAN
FILM WEEK**
Norwegian film "Her-
and Swedish film
"Dancing Feet" at
Royal Cultural Centre
7 pm and 7:30 pm.
Admission free.

...and Danish
the Conqueror
Royal Cultural C

FILM
 et objet du
 at the French Cul-
 ture, Lubal Weibach at
 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
 on films en-
 titled "Under
 Norms — Making
 at the British
 Lubal American on
 4, April 28 and
 5, April 29 at
 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
 Weibach

EXHIBITIONS

... until May 12.
... by Nam An
at Hamuray Art
Gardens, Street
... until May
... by Yessou Al
... at the Ori-
ginal, Shiner-
... until
... photographic exhibi-
tion "A Tour in the
..." by Jau-ou and
... at the French
Centre, until

Inta

**ASIM
SABIR**
runs a
insurance
Internet
Chicago
computer
system
development
The

News in Brief

Regent congratulates Mandela on national day

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal, the Regent, sent a cable Sunday to South African President Nelson Mandela congratulating him personally and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on his country's national day.

German standards expert inspects RSS facility

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior assessor from the German Calibration Service (DKD) visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) over the past days to make the final technical assessment needed for granting international accreditation to the Standards and Calibration Laboratory at the RSS Electronic Services and Training Centre in the field of DC measurement, according to an RSS press release. The assessor, Dr. Schumacher, expressed his satisfaction with the results and said the laboratory will be recommended for international accreditation as a DKD laboratory.

RSS, Yemeni ministry sign cooperation agreement

SANAA (Petra) — An agreement was signed Sunday between the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the Yemeni ministry of water and electricity. The agreement aims to enhance bilateral cooperation in making use of solar energy.

Court charges nine with murder, other crimes

AMMAN (J.T.) — The State Security Court charged nine persons on Sunday with involvement in a number of murder, robbery, embezzlement, and kidnapping cases.



Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour welcomes the visiting Ukrainian defence minister upon his arrival in Amman (Petra photo)

Ukrainian defence minister arrives for talks on bilateral ties

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ukrainian defence minister, Alexander Kozomok, arrived Sunday in Amman at the head of a delegation to discuss bolstering bilateral ties with Jordan.

In a statement upon his arrival, Mr. Kozomok said he and Jordanian officials will discuss upgrading Ukraine's relations with the Kingdom in various fields of mutual concern. Mr. Kozomok said the Ukraine supports Jordan in many areas, especially in military fields, and appreciates Jordan's role in U.N. peace-keeping efforts around the world.

The Ukrainian minister, who is spending several days in the Kingdom, was welcomed by acting Prime Minister and acting Minister of Defence Abdullah Ensour and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordan Armed Forces, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miral Kaabneh. Dr. Ensour told journalists that Jordan seeks to bolster its relations with the Ukraine in all fields, noting that 4,000 Jordanians currently study in Ukrainian universities.

Senate speaker meets with visiting NATO parliamentary delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai on Sunday said Jordan was looking forward to the role that the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) could play in establishing peace in the Middle East and helping it embark on economic development.

At a meeting with a visiting parliamentary delegation representing NATO countries, Mr. Rifai said the lack of peace in the region is mainly due to Israel's intransigent position and its attempts to escape from implementing previously signed peace agreements and accords.

The world community is called upon to shoulder its responsibility and force the Israeli government to honour its commitments and implement U.N. resolutions on the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian tracks, he said. Mr. Rifai reviewed the general situation in the region, emphasising Jordan's principled stand on the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace.

Also Sunday, the delegation met with the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Sa'd Hayel Srour, who echoed Mr. Rifai's call for the NATO nations to help bring about a just peace. Mr. Srour stressed that the Arab countries are seeking peace and have renounced all forms of terrorism. He stressed that Jordan is a staunch supporter of efforts to ensure that the Middle East is a zone free of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

Conference on unemployment in Jordan receives approval

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has given permission for a national conference to be held on the problem of unemployment in Jordan at a date to be announced, according to government sources quoted by the Arabic daily Al Ra'i on Sunday.

The report quoted the sources as saying that the aims of and general mechanism for the conference have already been set. It added that Dr. Majali gave his consent after receiving a proposal from Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Enmush.

According to the sources, both the private and public sectors will be represented at the meeting, during which several working papers dealing with unemployment are to be reviewed.

The sources expressed belief that there are at least 100,000 unemployed Jordanians at present while 600,000 non-Jordanians are working in the country. Last November, the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan published a study showing that between 22 and 27.5 per cent of Jordanians are unemployed. The Department to Statistics earlier announced the unemployment rate stood at 15 per cent.

International institution introduces educational system

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The U.S.-based SABIS foundation, which runs a group of international institutions including the International School of Choueifat, has developed a comprehensive educational system to enhance children's development. The SABIS educational system, which aims at qualifying students for international universities and colleges by providing them with a well-rounded education based on mastery of English, mathematics and another language, was presented during a public meeting on Saturday.

The SABIS system is geared toward providing a solid technological foundation for students to boost their intellectual efforts and enable them cope with continued advancements worldwide. It also encourages participation through teamwork to develop a true understanding of the people of the world through an appreciation of the differences as well as the similarities.

International military equipment exhibition opens tomorrow

By Ahmad Kreishan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An international exhibition of military equipment from 80 foreign and 30 local firms will open in Amman tomorrow under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

The exhibition, the second of its kind to be held in Jordan, is being organised by the London-based Contingent and Operational Procurement Exhibition (COPEX) in conjunction with the Jordan Armed Forces.

Colonel Mit'eb Daboubi, head of the organising committee representing the Jordan Armed Forces, said the exhibition will be held at the King Abdullah Military Base and will be open to the public.

The idea for the exhibition came from HRH Prince Abdullah, said Col. Daboubi, who noted that the first such exhibition, held in December 1996, was extremely successful.

Col. Daboubi said sophisticated military hardware, including defence equipment, helicopters, amphibious vehicles, military gear, armoured cars and telecommunications equipment used in the field by special forces and rapid deployment forces, will be on display at the exhibition.

Among the major powers represented are the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and Russia, he said, pointing out that the Israeli government will not take part.

The opening of the exhibition will include a free-fall parachuting demonstration by paratroopers, as well as other exercises, he added.

Jordan, Germany sign JD5.12m water project agreements

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three agreements were signed Sunday between Jordan and Germany to build a new sewage plant in the Wadi Hassan area in Irbid and launch two water projects in the Wadi Musa area to increase the potable water supply.

The three agreements were signed by Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin and a representative from the German Development Bank.

According to the minister, the two projects will cost JD5.12 million. Dr. Haddadin said the construction of the sewage plant in Wadi Hassan is the first step toward a comprehensive JD6.6 million sewage system in Greater Irbid which will serve Nuweimeh, Kiem and Shatana.

The minister pointed out that the new plant treats water and makes it suitable for agriculture without affecting underground water.

Dr. Haddadin said the two projects in Wadi Musa is subdivided into two schemes: the first consists of a pumping station and water tower with a 1,000-cubic metre capacity in the Jitha area and a 4,500-cubic metre capacity pumping station and water tower in the El area.

The German bank will grant Jordan a 30-year loan to finance the construction of the projects at a two per cent interest rate, including a 10-year grace period.

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Ensur invites media to submit proposals on draft press law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour has invited editorial writers from Jordanian newspapers to focus their attention on the new draft press and publications law over the next two months and help the government introduce balanced legislation that meets national requirements.

At a meeting Saturday with journalists, Dr. Ensour said the government is now drafting the new law, which has not yet been endorsed by the Ministry of Information or the Council of Ministers.

Some journalists have been attacking the draft law without having read it, said Dr. Ensour, adding that an in-depth study of the draft and its positive and negative aspects is needed to contribute to the formulation of a final version.

U.N. campaign launched to fight parasitical disease in refugee camps

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

\$7,000 for the operation.

with recommendations by the World Health Organisation.

AMMAN — Two U.N. agencies have launched a campaign to fight an infestation of parasitical worms spreading among students attending 300 schools in Palestinian refugee camps run by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jordan, an official said Sunday.

Nasha'at Ammari, UNRWA health programmes chief, said the drive was launched earlier this month in cooperation with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), which is paying

Doctors operating in UNRWA clinics in the camps discovered that the worms were affecting a large number of students from different age groups," he told the Jordan Times. "Hence we jointly launched the campaign."

Doctors say the worm is spread by lack of personal hygiene and overcrowding in each house in the camp — an average of eight family members live in one room with basic sanitary facilities.

Doctors are distributing a special pill called Mebendazole to fight the worm in line

The UNRWA was set up after the war that led to Israel's creation in 1948 to offer educational help, relief and social services to millions of Palestinian refugees who fled to neighbouring states. Jordan alone is home to over 1.2 million U.N.-registered refugees.

Israelis protest Olmert's proposal to annex suburbs to Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

demonstrators. Eli Moityal, head of the Mevasseret Municipal Council, said the community had cancelled its independence day celebrations and would boycott the national jubilee this week marking Israel's 50th birthday.

"They can't take away our independence and then expect us to celebrate," Mr. Moityal said on Israel army radio.

To underline their point, Tsur Hadassah, 15 kilometres west of Jerusalem, drove slowly through a main artery into the city, creating a bottleneck during morning rush-hour traffic.

(Continued from page 1)

proposal is not linked to demographic or geographic considerations, but is meant merely to centralise services and save money on administration.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert's proposal calls for the annexation of rural Tsur Hadassah, Mevasseret and other outlying communities to the West.

In protest, residents of Tsur Hadassah, 15 kilometres west of Jerusalem, drove slowly through a main artery into the city, creating a bottleneck during morning rush-hour traffic.

Police pulled over dozens of cars and confiscated drivers' licences. On the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway, traffic was heavy as residents of Mevasseret, 9 kilometres from the capital, tried to block the road. Others set fire to tires on an overpass and blocked an exit with piles of sand.

Police detained 10 demonstrators. Eli Moityal, head of the Mevasseret Municipal Council, said the community had cancelled its independence day celebrations and would boycott the national jubilee this week marking Israel's 50th birthday.

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Afghan adversaries open crucial talks to end 18-year war

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Afghanistan's warring sides opened their first direct peace talks here Sunday with a call from the Taliban militia's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar to find an Islamic solution to the bitter conflict which has left thousands dead.

"We have suggested the Islamic decision by the ulama (Islamic scholars), we reaffirm the same and do not have any other formula," Mr. Omar said in a "peace formula" message presented to the steering committee meeting by the leader of the Taliban delegation Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil.

Mr. Omar said the Taliban were fighting not for power but for the implementation of Islamic order in Afghanistan and offered to hand over power if their opponents could prove under Islamic law that was not true.

"If our opponents do not accept this claim, then they should reject it in the light of Islamic laws, and we will relinquish everything and we will immediately hand over the government and the power to them," Mr. Omar said.

The Taliban militia controls two-thirds of Afghanistan after seizing

Kabul in September 1996 and has imposed a strict brand of Islamic rule.

Thousands of Afghans have died in fictional fighting since 1992 after the fall of the Communist government in Kabul. Earlier more than a million Afghans were killed during Muslim resistance against the 1979-89 Soviet military occupation.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, speaking at the opening ceremony, said the international community was watching the talks unfold with "great expectations."

The first face-to-face meeting between the two sides is taking place under the auspices of the U.N. and the 54-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference.

James N'Gobi representing the U.N. Special Mission for Afghanistan and Ibrahim Saleh Bakar, assistant secretary general of the OIC appealed to the two sides to work for peace and pledged to provide every assistance.

As the leaders of the warring factions sat down to talks in Pakistan Sunday, the frontlines were calm with Taliban fighters north of the Afghan capital opting for cups of tea instead of fighting.

But the calm came after heaviest fighting in nine months Saturday, witnesses said.

The frontlines between the hardline militia and their northern opponents — situated 25 kilometres north of Kabul — remained static following the heavy but failed Taliban dawn attack early Saturday.

"The Taliban launched a big attack on the main road yesterday but got beaten back," a local shepherd on the frontlines told AFP.

The Taliban troops blamed the fighting on the opposition and claimed to have inflicted heavy losses on their opponents.

"We don't launch offensives, we are all the time ready for peace talks," Mullah Abdul Hafiz explained.

Although troops here denied any casualties on their side, independent medical sources reported that around 60 Taliban wounded had been admitted to Kabul's military hospital.

mission of ulama, or Islamic scholars, to tackle political issues, sources said.

Other issues on the agenda are a ceasefire, an exchange of prisoners and the unhindered flow of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.

"Unfortunately, along with these negotiations some military operations have been stepped up," Taliban delegate said, adding such things make people unhappy.

But he added: "We should not be disappointed and prepare for peace and stability which is the need of every Afghan child."

The northern alliance spokesman Engineer Abdul Rahim also played down the incident saying "nothing will harm the negotiations."

Leader of the opposition delegation Maulvi Fazal Hadi Shinwari added his side would "welcome" any step that brings the ulama and Mujahedeen together in search of peace.

An agreement on talks between the combatants was brokered by United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, in talks on April 17 with Afghan leaders in Afghanistan.



Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan (centre) looks on as Maulvi Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, head of the Taliban Islamic movement negotiators and Maulvi Faizal Hadi Shinwari (right), spokesman for the Afghan opposition alliance, shake hands after the initial round of peace talks in Islamabad. The talks among warring Afghan factions are meant to prepare for a larger commission of Islamic scholars to set terms for peace after about two decades of civil war (Reuters photo)

Policeman wounded in Kosovo shooting

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Clashes between armed Albanian separatists and Serbian security forces in Kosovo province Saturday left one policeman wounded. The Serbian Information centre said Sunday.

The policeman was injured in a bazooka attack around 6 p.m. Saturday (1600 GMT) on a police station in Kijevo, on the road between the capital, Pristina, and western town of Pec, the centre said.

Around three and a half hours later, Yugoslav soldiers turned back 10 armed Albanians trying

to enter Kosovo from neighbouring Albania, the centre said.

The group opened fire on the Yugoslav troops, who returned fire, the centre said, adding that there were no casualties among the soldiers.

The army seized more than 20 cases of explosives, the centre quoted military sources as saying.

Half an hour later, a grenade hit the Toplice Hotel in Podujevo, some 40 kilometres northeast of Pristina, but no injuries were reported, the centre said.

Last Thursday, at least

26 alleged Kosovo Albanian terrorists who tried to infiltrate the Yugoslav territory were killed in armed clashes with Yugoslav troops. The army said that the bodies of 19 were found and identified.

Funerals of the 19 Albanians were expected to be held late Sunday, in the region of Djakovica, Serbian sources indicated. Albanian sources did not immediately confirm the information.

Kosovo is a Serbian province whose population is predominantly ethnic Albanian.

Albanian premier defends self-defence groups in Kosovo

TIRANA (AFP) — Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano has lent public support to ethnic-Albanian rebels in the Serbian province of Kosovo, saying they had been forced to act in "self-defence" against increased Serb violence.

"Serbian propaganda considers these actions as terrorist acts, but in reality, they are the actions of self-defence against Serbian pathological and traditional violence," Mr. Nano said in a speech broadcast on state television Sunday.

His statements marked a change in the Albanian government's moderate stance towards the crisis in Kosovo, triggered by a Serbian security crackdown on Albanian "terrorists" that has claimed more than 100 lives in the past two months.

Albanian leaders have continuously said they had no information about underground ethnic Albanian groups in Kosovo.

"As it was expected, the first actions of armed resistance have started," Mr. Nano said.

"Continuous Serbian violence has increased the indignation and hatred of the Albanians against the terrorist policy of Yugoslav presi-

dent Slobodan Milosevic," he added.

Albania's armed forces and police along the border with Kosovo were put on maximum alert Friday following clashes between the Yugoslav army and armed Kosovo Albanians.

The Yugoslav army said at least 26 Kosovo Albanians were killed in the fighting.

Kosovo "has become a priority for the Albanian diplomacy... our police, army, secret services, in short, for us all," Mr. Nano said.

"We should work without falling into nationalistic positions... but we should do our duties to defend our national interests," he added.

Tension between the two neighbours has been rising for weeks, with Belgrade accusing Albania of supplying logistical support to the separatist campaign of Kosovo's Albanians. Tirana has denied the charges.

Mr. Nano confirmed that his government had been in extensive contact with U.S. and European diplomats over the past four weeks to discuss the current situation in Kosovo.

"We hope very much for active international support for Kosovo, but we should remember that the

(International Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia) is not united on the issue," Mr. Nano said.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Saturday that some governments clearly did not approach the Kosovo problem "with the same sense of urgency that we do."

The contact group — comprising Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States — gave Yugoslavia four weeks on March 25 to improve its handling of the Kosovo situation, before deciding on sanctions that could include a freeze on Belgrade's foreign assets.

The "international community should adopt all possible measures to pressure the Yugoslav government and Milosevic," Mr. Nano said, adding that Albania believed sanctions would prove "very effective" in resolving the situation.

Mr. Nano also stressed that Albania had remained firm in opposing "terrorism and the traffic of weapons."

"Albania insists on a peaceful solution of the crisis in Kosovo," he said.



An Albanian officer sits on top of a Russian-type Chinese-built T-54 tank of the 1960s before military training at a military unit in Zall Herr, 15 km from the capital Tirana (Reuters photo)

Some Serbs exit Bosnia riot town, but vow to return

DRVAR, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — Some 180 Serbs left this Croat-dominated town in western Bosnia overnight, shaken by rioting Friday but determined to return.

They left under international auspices, travelling in four buses and heading for Banja Luka, Bosnia's second city and capital of its Serb entity Republika Srpska.

Speaking to AFP before departure, they said they were leaving not out of fear, but because their apartments had been wrecked by Croat rioters, and they vowed to come back.

"We will return to Drvar, sooner or later," said one of them, pensioner Nedeljko Trakic, 63.

Most of the nearly 2,000 Serbs in Drvar — and whose numbers have been growing in recent weeks in what the international community is billing "the year of returns" — are staying behind.

Based in the town is a Canadian unit of NATO's Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia which fired warning shots to quell Friday's riot after mobs burned down the local U.N. police station and beat up mayor Mile Marceta, a Serb.

"SFOR was fair, but the crowd was more powerful," one Serb woman said.

Ethnic tension flared up again Saturday in another part of Bosnia, when — for the second time in three days — hostile Serbs prevented some 400 Croat refugees from attending a Roman Catholic mass.

While the Croats' buses went away, the mass went ahead at Saint Mark's monastery at Plehan, near the northern town of Derventa in Serb-held territory.

"The message of this mass was to tell those who do not believe in refugee returns that there will be returns, and that we all have to look forward together," said Sarajevo Bishop Pero Sudar, who attended the mass.

Thursday a mob of 1,000 Serbs trapped Bosnia's Cardinal Vinko Puljic, a Croat, inside a Derventa church for six hours after they turned back a convoy of Croat worshippers.

The Serbs who left Drvar overnight Saturday had been trapped for a day inside a school during the rioting, with no utilities and little food, said Liam McDowall, a U.N. spokesman.

The apartment block that they occupied was ransacked during the riot, and a fire was set on its roof.

Many of the Serbs accused members of Bosnia's Croat army, the HVO, of dressing up as civilians and taking part in the violence.

"Unless the army leaves, there can be no life for us here," a Serb said.

Drvar was 97 per cent Serb before the war, but fell to Croats towards the end of the 1992-95 conflict. Many of the Croats who live here now are refugees themselves from other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Carlos Westendorp, the international community's high representative in Bosnia, sent one of his deputies, Andy Bearpark, to assess the situation.

"This behaviour is unacceptable and a disgrace," he said of the violence.

What happened in Drvar and Derventa is sure to dominate a day-long conference in Banja Luka Tuesday on refugee returns that will bring together Bosnian and international officials, observers said.

Resistance to the return of Bosnia's estimated 1.8 million refugees persists in many parts of the country.

Indian government in fresh trouble as another ally smarts

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's beleaguered Hindu-nationalist-led coalition faced fresh trouble when an ally accused the government of not taking it into confidence, an official said Sunday.

The Samata Party (Equality Party) of Defence Minister George Fernandes also demanded the dismissal of the state government of Bihar saying the provincial government "had ruined the state."

Infighting between members of the multi-party minority coalition has led to two ministers leaving Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee's cabinet within the past fortnight amid mudslinging between alliance partners.

Digvijay Singh, Samata Party spokesman, said at the party's on-going two day meet the nationalists did not consult the party when it appointed new governors for the state.

"We were simply presented with a fait accompli. None of our members was considered for filling up any

of the vacant slots," Mr. Singh said.

"We have also notified the government for its delay in dismissing the state government of Bihar," India's most lawless state, he said.

The Samata Party's protests are the latest to hit the month-old coalition government of Vajpayee, which came to power last month following indecisive national elections.

Mr. Vajpayee had told his dozen partners two days ago to "exercise restraint" and stop airing contentious issues in public after a warning partner demanded the resignation of several ministers in his cabinet.

Jayalitha Jayaram's demand earlier this week came after one of her protégés within the cabinet was forced to step down over corruption allegations.

Mr. Vajpayee sacked his communications minister last week, but Ms. Jayalitha, who commands 27 MPs in the 264-seat coalition, wanted two more ministers to resign arguing they are facing corruption

charges similar to her ousted protégé.

That crisis blew over Sunday when one of the senior members of Mr. Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) held talks with Ms. Jayalitha and resolved their differences.

The BJP member was quoted in newspapers as saying that Ms. Jayalitha had agreed to attend a meeting of all the allies in May and drop her demand of sacking ministers.

Mr. Vajpayee's BJP, the largest bloc in parliament, had to rely on the support of regional groups to help cobble together a coalition. It scraped through a confidence vote in March.

The regional groups are without a national agenda and do not share the core beliefs of the Hindu nationalists. There are more than 40 such groups in the current parliament.

India has had five governments since 1996. Both elections produced huge parliaments and minority governments.

Blast damages bar in N. Ireland

BELFAST (R) — An explosion damaged a Catholic owned bar and restaurant near the Northern Ireland city of Armagh overnight but there were no casualties, police said Sunday.

Random sectarian violence has persisted in the British province despite a peace accord signed earlier this month.

Police said a bomb believed to contain a kilo of high explosive exploded outside the bar's back door late Saturday night, sending customers into panic.

"It was a nightmare," said the manager of the bar, which was full of Roman Catholic and Protestant customers.

Some 20 years ago, loyalist guerrillas tossed a bomb into the same premises, killing a Catholic and a Protestant. This time, said police, customers escaped injury but staff said drinkers fled in terror.

The bombing underlined the determination of dissident factions to continue violence, despite this month's landmark peace deal aimed at ending three decades of "troubles" in Northern Ireland.

In the capital, Belfast, a man was taken to hospital after being shot in the leg outside a pub Saturday night in what appeared to be a paramilitary-style "knee-capping" punishment.

The incident occurred in a pro-British rule Protestant area of Belfast.

Earlier Saturday, police arrested two men in connection with the murder of Catholic student Claran Heffron, 22.

The young man's body was found with head wounds near a railway station in the village of Crumlin north of Belfast.

"A motive for the crime has not yet been established," Bill Stewart, police commander for the Belfast area, told reporters.

"The investigation is at an early stage but it has all the hallmarks of a Random sectarian shooting."

Heffron was killed only a day after two key Protestant guerrilla groups announced their support for the April 10 peace deal reached by eight main Protestant and Catholic political parties and the British and Irish governments.

Protestant politician David Ervine, a leader of the pro-British progressive unionist party, condemned the murder and blamed the breakdown loyalist volunteer force, a hardline Protestant group opposed to the peace deal, which will go to a referendum in Northern Ireland and the republic next month.

Khmer Rouge officer predicts fighting flare up

BANGKOK (R) — A senior Khmer Rouge guerrilla officer said Sunday the Cambodian government's rejection of a rebel peace effort meant fighting between the guerrillas and government forces would drag on.

The guerrilla commander predicted his men would wrest back control of the former rebel headquarters of Anlong Veng within a week.

"Hun Sen rejected our peace overture. It means that Hun Sen wants to continue the war. He wants Cambodians to continue killing each other," senior Khmer Rouge official Khem Ngun told Reuters by telephone from northern Cambodia.

"We have no choice but to continue fighting," he said.

Last week Khem Ngun said the Khmer Rouge had proposed a peace plan including the setting up of a government of national reconciliation.

Defence Minister Tea Banh later rejected the proposal as "worthless."

The Khmer Rouge, responsible for the death of more than a million people during former leader Pol Pot's "killing fields" rule in the 1970s, has been seriously weakened by a wave of

defections to the government since late March.

Pol Pot died in rebel-held territory in northern Cambodia on April 15.

Defectors, backed by government forces, have taken control of the group's former headquarters of Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia near the border with Thailand, but Khem Ngun said Sunday his men would soon recapture the area.

"I am confident that we can recapture Anlong Veng town within one week," he said.

"Hun Sen's soldiers and the defectors are only dug in part of Anlong Veng, but I have my supporters all over the country," he said.

After losing Anlong Veng late last month, Khem Ngun and the hold-out remnants of the notorious guerrilla group withdrew to the Dongrek mountains bordering Thailand.

Khem Ngun represents a second, younger generation of Khmer Rouge leaders, untainted by direct responsibility for the excesses of Pol Pot's rule.

The Phnom Penh government has vowed to bring three of Pol Pot's old comrades to justice including Khmer Rouge

military strongman Ta Mok. Pol Pot's long-time right-hand man Nuon Chea and the group's political front man, Khieu Samphan.

But the government has said other Khmer Rouge members were welcome to defect to the Phnom Penh side.

Khem Ngun also said Hun Sen was bound to win the general election scheduled for July 26. Khem Ngun said he was ordering his supporters to boycott the vote.

"This is going to be a dirty election. Hun Sen is going to extend his influence all over the country from the village level, to the provincial to the national level," he said.

The Khmer Rouge rejected Cambodia's last election in 1993 which was narrowly won by Prince Norodom Ranariddh and his royalist FUNCINPEC party.

Prince Ranariddh agreed to a power-sharing coalition with former government leader Hun Sen after Hun Sen objected to the election result and the country faced renewed strife.

Hun Sen ousted Prince Ranariddh in a coup last July but the prince is hoping to contest the July 26 vote.

Spanish m... park near drowned

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish emergency services mounted a dig ditched into the makeshift dikes to save small hours of Sunday to save one of Europe's great wildlife reserves from disappearing.

Spanish Minister Isabel Torres was able to declare the "El Estero de Doñana Park" near the Atlantic coast in south-western Spain out of danger.

Emergency teams and the Spanish Civil Guard managed to divert the deadly approach of 5.2 million cubic metres of highly acidic liquid which had cracked after soil gave way.

The water spilled into the Guadamar River which runs through the park and into its swamps. Although the park was saved, the minister warned that the accident had all caused a major ecological disaster whose consequences in surrounding farmland could not yet be measured.

She continued after a brief helicopter flight over the region in Andalusia that the flood would not reach the swamps, the Doñana, made a natural park in 1969, is also home to an exclusive residence at which the Spanish government regularly entertains guests, the most recent being British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

One of Spain's and Europe's finest wildlife

Hillary Clinton for 5 hours on W

WASHINGTON (AFP) — First Lady Hillary Clinton was questioned under oath for five hours by members of a special counsel investigating the Whitewater real estate affair.

The Saturday testimony came as a May 7 deadline approached on prosecutors investigating the Whitewater affair. The interview lasted approximately five hours, was conducted under oath and was videotaped for presentation to the grand jury in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Counsel Charles Ruff said in a statement that Clinton was independent.

Clinton and her staff conducted the videotaped interview at the White House, Ruff added.

The Little Rock grand jury is investigating the Whitewater matter, the statement said.

The Whitewater case — a failed real estate deal that dated back to the 1970s — was the first matter investigated by the special counsel's office.

Mr. Starr later expanded his investigation into other matters, including the sex-and-money probe involving former White House intern Monica Lewinsky that could involve possible obstruction of justice charges against President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Starr is preparing to interview Hillary Clinton's former partner Webster Hubbell on tax evasion charges.

Mr. Starr has until May 7 to either complete the same or ask a judge to seal the grand jury.

Hillary Clinton had previ-

ously reported that she and Mr. de Klerk, who shared the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize with President Nelson Mandela for his role in ending apartheid,

was quoted times as divorcee years. Ma-

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Spanish national park nearly drowned in poison

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish emergency services frantically dug ditches and built makeshift dykes into the small hours of Sunday to save one of Europe's great wildlife reserves from poisoning by millions of tonnes of acid water. By Sunday morning, Spanish Environment Minister Isabel Tocino was able to declare the 73,000 hectare Doñana National Park near the Atlantic coast in south-western Spain out of danger.

Emergency teams and the Spanish Civil Guard managed to divert the deadly approach of 5.2 million cubic metres of highly acid liquid when an upstream water treatment basin of an iron pyrite mine cracked after soil gave way.

The water spilled into the Guadimar River which runs through the park and into its swamps. Although the park was saved, the minister warned that the accident had still caused a major ecological disaster whose consequences to surrounding farmland could not yet be measured.

She confirmed after a helicopter flight over the region in Andalusia that the flood would not reach the swamps. Doñana, made a national park in 1969, is also home to an exclusive residence at which the Spanish government regularly entertains guests, the most recent being British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

One of Spain's and Europe's finest wildlife

reserves, it is noted particularly for its bird colonies and Iberian lynxes.

Emergency teams diverted the toxic stream into the Guadalquivir River which skirts the eastern side of the park and flows into the Atlantic.

The minister said the water had successfully been diverted into hastily dug canals and began discharging into the sea Sunday morning at low tide, thus preventing a fatal flow-back towards the park centre.

"We can congratulate ourselves because the heart of Doñana is safe from direct contamination," the minister said.

But the Guadimar River would probably require several decades to recover its normal level of acidity.

The minister called for investigations into the company operating the mine, Minas de Aznalcollar, which is part of the Swedish multinational Boliden Apsara.

Ecological organisations have already denounced the existence of what they called a disaster waiting to happen.

The Spanish association for the Defence of Nature said in a statement: "It is incomprehensible how the Environment Ministry could permit the existence of a reservoir of more than five million cubic of toxic water above a river like the Guadimar which is vital to the Doñana marshes and the local economy."

Hillary Clinton testifies for 5 hours on Whitewater

WASHINGTON (AFP) — First lady Hillary Clinton was questioned under oath for five hours by members of a special counsel investigating the Whitewater real estate affair, the White House said.

The Saturday testimony came as a May 7 deadline approached on prosecutors investigating the Arkansas phase of the Whitewater affair.

The interview lasted approximately five hours, was conducted under oath and was videotaped for presentation to the grand jury in Little Rock, Arkansas. White House Counsel Charles Ruff said in a statement.

Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and his staff conducted the videotaped interview at the White House, Mr. Ruff added.

The Little Rock grand jury is investigating the Whitewater matter, the statement said.

The Whitewater case — a failed real estate deal that dates back to the 1970s — was the first matter investigated by the special counsel's office.

Mr. Starr later expanded his investigation into other matters, including the sex-and-lies probe involving former White House intern Monica Lewinsky that could involve possible obstruction of justice charges against President Bill Clinton.

In Arkansas, reports have said Mr. Starr is preparing to indict Hillary Clinton's former law partner, Webster Hubbell on tax evasion charges. Mr. Starr has until May 7 to either complete the Arkansas phase of his investigation or ask a judge to seat another grand jury.

Hillary Clinton had previ-

ously testified five times on other matters under investigation.

The latest interview concerned her law firm in Arkansas and its representation of the now-defunct Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan and Hillary Clinton's "relationship with related individuals," the statement said without elaborating.

At issue is whether the Clintons tried to cover up a criminal conspiracy involving real estate deals in Arkansas. Key figures in the case are the late James McDougal and his ex-wife Susan, who owned Madison Guaranty and who tried to use the land deal as a way of shoring up their ailing thrift.

The transaction and its related deals since have resulted in fraud convictions against the McDougals, former Arkansas governor Jim Guy Tucker and a former local judge, David Hale. While the complicated, arcane investigation is potentially more damaging to the Clintons, it is so intricate that few in the U.S. public seem to be following the case — or even care, according to repeated opinion polls.

Former White House lawyer Lanny Davis, who worked on the Whitewater case, said that Hillary Clinton's role in the affair was minimal.

"Ken Starr should get a life," Mr. Davis said, stating that the affair has already been investigated and no wrongdoing found.

"This proves this guy (Starr) is desperate and he has nowhere to go," Mr. Davis added.



Social Democratic Party (SPD) candidate and Saxony-Anhalt Premier Reinhard Hoenneke casts his vote for the state elections as his wife Renate looks on in Magdeburg. More than 2.1 million people are asked to vote a new parliament in Germany's federal state Saxony-Anhalt (Reuters photo)

India cracks down on Tibetan hunger strikers ahead of Chinese visit

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian authorities Sunday cracked down on Tibetans who have been on hunger strike here since March 10, forcibly taking three of the six protesters to hospital.

The pre-dawn action in the heart of the city came ahead of a planned first-ever trip to India by a Chinese army chief, prompting allegations that New Delhi had buckled under diplomatic pressure.

Three of the hunger-strikers, who have been demanding freedom for their homeland from Chinese rule, were forced off the pavement where they had been camping and bundled into an ambulance by some 200 policemen.

The Tibetans had refused food for nearly 50 days, and the protest — the first of its kind by Tibetans in India — had attracted worldwide attention, including appeals by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) said the three Tibetan hunger strikers were being drip-fed with glucose in hospital while the other three were still continuing their fast.

"We are aggrieved by... the manner in which the police handled our strikers," TYC President Tseten Norbu said here in a statement. "Dawa Gyalpo (30 years) vomited as he was thrown into the ambulance."

The other two who were shifted to hospital were Karma Sichoe, 25, and Dawa Tsering, 53. TYC chief Mr. Norbu said the crackdown was an attempt by the Indian government to appease China ahead of the arrival of General Fu Quanyou, head of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army.

Mr. Norbu told AFP: "The forceful hospitalisation of three Tibetans coincides with the arrival of General Fu. It was a move meant to placate the Chinese leadership at the cost of Tibetan issue."

"It is a bad development. The police behaved badly with us and the treatment meted out to the three protesters was inhuman."

Mr. Norbu said more than 100 members of the TYC had decided to form a "human shield" around the three other hunger strikers, including a woman, to prevent the police from removing them.

"We will continue our protest till our demands are met," Mr. Norbu said. "There should be positive response from the United Nations, and there is no way we will back out."

India says the visit by General Fu beginning late Sunday will boost "confidence-building measures" between the two Asian neighbours which fought a brief border war in 1962.

Analysts say the visit could be overshadowed by China's alleged missile technology sales to Pakistan.

Indian police had warned the hunger strikers Saturday that they risked arrest if they refused to be hospitalised. Doctors warned that the health of the fasters was deteriorating.

India is home to the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of six million Tibetans. He has lived in exile in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamsala since fleeing his homeland in 1959 following a failed anti-China uprising.

The Dalai Lama's government-in-exile is not recognised by any country. More than 100,000 Tibetan refugees also live in India.

East German state votes in key test for Kohl

MAGDEBURG, Germany (R) — Voters in the Eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt went to the polls Sunday in a state election that is seen as an important test of voter sentiment before September's federal election.

Voter surveys predict Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) will be soundly defeated by the Social Democrats (SPD), who have skillfully tapped into local frustration over failed promises of German unity and turned it against Mr. Kohl.

Seven weeks after crushing Mr. Kohl in another state vote in Lower Saxony, the SPD are also eager to use Saxony-Anhalt as a further springboard in their drive to oust Mr. Kohl. Europe's longest-serving leader, in September's national ballot.

In national voter surveys, the SPD is already around eight percentage points ahead of Mr. Kohl's conservatives with five months remaining before the federal ballot.

The 68-year-old chancellor, who was jeered at cam-

paign appearances in Saxony-Anhalt, tried to lower expectations for his party by telling a CDU gathering in the West that a weak result would not mean September's election was lost.

"The election result (Sunday) is one thing, the general election is something else," Mr. Kohl said in a speech in the western town of Neuss Saturday.

Polling stations in the depressed state of Saxony-Anhalt west of Berlin opened at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT). The first exit polls are due to be announced by the major television networks just after the polls close at 6 p.m. (1800 GMT).

The skies were mostly clear early Sunday when the 2.2 million eligible voters began casting their ballots, but showers were expected later in the day.

Mr. Kohl won reelection in 1990 and 1994 thanks to strong support from the formerly Communist East. But this time, opinion polls predict, the chancellor could lose the East.

Industrial and social dis-

location since the collapse of Communism have been traumatic. The unemployment rate in the east is more than double that in the West. The situation is most critical in Saxony-Anhalt, once home to the Communist smokestack industries that have long since shut down.

Voters in Saxony-Anhalt, which has the highest jobless rate in Germany of 25 per cent, blame the veteran chancellor and the CDU for the unemployment and stagnating economy rather than the SPD, who have governed from the capital in Magdeburg since 1994.

Mr. Kohl's CDU are seen falling to 26 per cent of the vote in the bell-shaped state of three million from 34 per cent in 1994 and 39 per cent in 1990, according to a voter survey published Friday by the dimap research institute.

The SPD is seen gaining eight points to 42 per cent in Saxony-Anhalt. The SPD has shared power since 1994 in a minority coalition with the greens party. The coalition relied on support from the reform Communist Party of Democratic

Socialism (PDS).

The PDS is expected to win about 20 per cent.

Pollsters predict that the greens may not win the necessary five per cent to qualify for seats in the assembly. The dimap poll gave the Greens three per cent, down from 3.1 per cent.

The Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) could qualify with five per cent, up from 3.6 per cent in 1994.

The dimap poll also said the far-right German Peoples Union (DVU) could jump to six per cent and make Saxony-Anhalt the first state in the east with the far-right in the state assembly.

Mr. Kohl campaigned extensively in Saxony-Anhalt, but was taunted by whistles and jeers at rallies over his widely derided 1990 prediction of an economic boom in the East.

His SPD challenger, Lower Saxony Premier Gerhard Schroeder, has also led campaign rallies. Mr. Schroeder promised to cut unemployment and keep federal financial aid flowing to the East.

4 Sherpas swept away by avalanche on Mount Annapurna

KATHMANDU (AFP) — Four high-altitude Nepalese mountain guides employed by an Italian team were swept away by an avalanche near the peak of 8,091-metre Mount Annapurna in the Himalayas, police said Sunday.

The accident occurred Saturday between camp one at 5,600-metres and camp two at 6,100-metres, a police officer said.

The tourism ministry said it was aware of the accident but was awaiting detailed information and confirmation of the fate of the four Sherpas.

Bad weather prevented an army rescue helicopter from reaching the Annapurna base-camp Sunday.

The four-member Italian team is led by Mario Lunario Penzeri.

Reports reaching Kathmandu said none of the Italian climbers was hurt when the avalanche struck.

Looming crisis in Anglo-Argentine relations over Falklands restrictions

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A crisis is looming in relations between Britain and Argentina over new restrictions on companies mining on the Falkland islands without permission from Buenos Aires.

At mid-week the Argentine Senate approved a law that would sanction any company that plans on exploiting the island's minerals and natural resources.

The proposed law, which still needs presidential approval, was presented by Senator Eduardo Menem, head of the senate foreign affairs committee and brother to President Carlos Menem.

The move is part of a diplomatic dance seven months before the presidential elections in London on an official visit.

The underlying issue is ownership of the windswept islands, known here as the Malvinas.

Argentina has claimed the islands, located almost 2,000 kilometres southeast of Buenos Aires, since British rule began in 1833. In 1982 Argentina invaded the islands, but then lost a bitter 74-day war to

Britain.

Although a new war is out of the question, President Menem has repeatedly vowed that the islands will return to Argentina before the year 2000, even if this means joint ownership with Britain.

A weekend trip to the Falklands by British Deputy Foreign Minister Tony Lloyd could however begin to smooth relations between the two countries.

Mr. Lloyd is scheduled to visit a military cemetery at Port Stanley, the main city on the largest island, where British soldiers are buried.

Some 237 Argentine soldiers who died in battle are also buried at Port Stanley, and legislators have formally asked the president to do whatever is necessary to get the Falkland authorities to allow an Argentine flag to fly over their cemetery.

However the Uruguayan news service Mercopress quoted Falklands Governor Richard Ralph as saying that an Argentine flag over a Port Darwin cemetery was "a fantasy."

ber William Luxton even said that he could personally pull any Argentine flag out and burn it, according to Mercopress.

"The whole issue makes me nervous," said Falklands council member Richard Cockwell, according to the news agency. "What ought to be seen as a humanitarian gesture could be interpreted as a political victory for Argentina."

Deputy Luis Rubeo, summing up the general feeling on the mainland, indicated it was a "lack of respect" for Falklands officials to refuse to place an Argentine flag over the cemetery.

"They seem to forget that the war ended, and that the Argentine and British governments have been since 1989 looking for a (peaceful) agreement to breach their differences," he said.

Senator Menem said that his sanctions proposal was in line with the 1994 Argentine constitution, which mandates every government to insist on Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands, Georgias and South Sandwich islands.

S. African president to marry millionaire's wife

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's last apartheid-era president, F.W. de Klerk, and the wife of Greek shipping magnate Tony Georgiadis plan to marry after they get divorces from their current spouses, the Johannesburg Sunday Times reported.

Mr. de Klerk, who shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize with President Nelson Mandela for his role in ending apartheid,

was quoted by the Sunday Times as saying he would divorce his wife of 39 years, Marike.

At the same time Elita Georgiadis told the newspaper that she had started divorce proceedings against her husband of 27 years, who owns a vineyard in South Africa's southern wine region in Paarl.

The couple live in Hampton Court, London. Mr. de Klerk, 61, dis-

closed in February that he had been having an affair with Georgiadis for several years. The couples were friends and shared frequent holidays in London and the Greek islands.

"I have already instructed my attorney to proceed with a divorce action. Mrs. Georgiadis is likewise busy with a divorce action and we plan to marry each other when that has been finalised," Mr. de Klerk told the paper.

Mrs. de Klerk is about to release a book about her marriage.

Mr. de Klerk repudiated apartheid in 1990 and began discussions with Mr. Mandela on a transition from white domination to democracy.

Mr. Mandela defeated Mr. de Klerk in the country's first all-race elections in 1994. Mr. de Klerk retired from politics last year, saying he wanted to write an autobiography.

Lebed's future gets pushed into Siberian ballot boxes

KRASNOYARSK, Russia (AFP) — Siberians turned out unusually high numbers Sunday for a regional election here crucial to the political future of former Russian general and presidential hopeful Alexander Lebed.

By early afternoon turnout was 36 per cent, well above the minimum 25 per cent for a valid election, an electoral commission official reported.

"The participation is more than double that in elections to the local parliament six months ago," he said.

Mr. Lebed, once Russia's most popular politician who took third place in the 1996 presidential poll and negotiated a peace settlement in Chechnya that year, has made no secret of his ambition to become Russian president after Boris Yeltsin in the year 2000. He is hoping a high turnout will help him to win, if not outright then at least in a runoff.

"I think the poll will be between 70 and 75 per cent because even people usually indifferent to politics are interested in this election," Gen. Lebed said Sunday, adding: "That gives me hope."

Gen. Lebed, resident in Moscow, is not entitled to



Reserve General Alexander Lebed leaves a polling station. The vast Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk voted Sunday in an election which could make or break Mr. Lebed's bid to become Russian president (Reuters photo)

vote, but made a visit to one of the polling stations.

Gen. Lebed's opponents dismiss him as a carpet-bagger. His chief rival, outgoing Krasnoyarsk regional Governor Valery Zubov, said: "I don't think people will vote for strangers who hardly know the big prob-

lems of this region."

One voter, a 50-year-old telecommunications engineer, explained why he was not voting for the general: "We know Zubov very well and General Lebed very little. Maybe he's a big politician but people are always afraid of voting for the

unknown."

General Lebed's retort: "It's an ancient Russian custom: people would rather keep a bad chief they know than take on an unknown."

Gen. Lebed, an ex-national security council secretary who faded from the limelight after Mr. Yeltsin sacked him, faces stiff competition. A loss could relegate him to a political wilderness more inhospitable than Siberia's frozen tundras.

Polls place him second behind Mr. Zubov. He is trailed by Communist candidate Piotr Romanov, followed far behind by a string of lesser-known aspirants.

If none of the names on the ballot paper clears 50 per cent of the votes, a second round election is to be organised.

The region is a tempting prize, one of the largest and richest in Russia, covering an area four times that of France.

Should he become govern-

Jordan Times

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Visionary move

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's decision to open up the Hashem 1 satellite communications channel to the private sector at a reduced cost, and in particular to Internet Service Providers (ISPs), is a move that is guaranteed to advance the Kingdom's information base and open new horizons for its young. His Majesty has always been sacrificing his earthly belongings for the good of Jordan and its people. At the recent meeting in Aqaba he told the government that if it found his personal residence there standing in the way of developing the port city, it should not hesitate to utilise it as he needed. And two years ago, he donated his own palace, the Hashimiyyah, to orphans.

Access to advanced telecommunications channels at a reasonable cost is fundamental to the development of the Kingdom in this day and age, when the world has turned into a global village and information has become vital in all fields.

The Internet is the wealthiest source of information today and also a popular means of communications that has proven to be faster and more efficient than the classical means of communications including the mail system and the fax machine.

Since he believes that the development of the country starts with the development of its human resources, the King took the unconventional decision to allow civilian use of military communications and made that contingent on ensuring that all public schools have access to the Internet in return.

Allowing the Kingdom's children access to the World Wide Web will usher them into the largest educational environment, and will offer them the means to communicate with the rest of the world, an exercise that has proven its power in opening up new personal horizons and offering insight into world cultures.

This, accompanied with access to the technology necessary to hook up to the Internet, such as computers and modems, will ensure that our children are updated on the latest innovations in the field. That will enable them to compete with the rest of the world in the future.

What remains to be seen now is how the ISPs, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and the military, are planning to hook up all these schools in a manner that will allow all children enough time on the web.

Reduced fees for telecommunications lease lines, especially for schools, will help make the vision of an information-driven society possible.

What is equally important is for the Ministry of Education to put together the means to install enough hardware and appropriate software at these schools so that this opportunity is not limited to a select few, but to all. What comes before that would be to ensure that there are enough personnel with computer and Internet expertise to teach children how to surf the Net and to ensure that they won't drown in the wide sea of information that boasts sharks amidst its waves alongside the tasty sea fruits and beautiful seashells.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi addressed the Palestinians declaration that they will proclaim an independent Palestinian state in May next year, saying this is the Palestinian people's right which was endorsed in the Oslo accords. But such plans require ample preparations especially as the Israelis are threatening to take counter action once the Palestinian state has been declared, cautioned the writer. He said the Palestinians are in dire need of national unity as they face self determination and they ought to join ranks, rally all the political groups and end their differences so as to be ready for the big event. Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority on the one hand, and the various factions living abroad on the other, should rally together and adopt a unified stand before such a declaration and should all be ready to confront the counter Israeli actions under any circumstances, Rimawi said. He said since the declaration of an independent state is a decision of destiny all political forces in Palestine should be ready for it in all respects.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Marwan Hazine called for genuine solidarity and coordination among Arab states to face common challenges and to achieve common goals. There can be no chance for Arab states to achieve any progress in their quest to regain their lands occupied by Israel, without U.S. backing, and it should be clear that every Arab country is targeted by the U.S.-Israeli alliance, warned the writer. The Madrid conference, he said, brought a new challenge which, at the time, should have unified the Arab countries. Hazine said. But, he said, the Arabs have, since that conference, shown signs of weakness and capitulation to the U.S.-Israeli hegemony. The writer said all the Arab states should show real concern over what is happening in Palestine, and act on that concern with real help to the Palestinians. He added that all Arab states should stand by Syria and Lebanon in the face of Israel's new plots against the two countries and its conditions for withdrawing from the occupied Lebanese territory.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The new age of competition possible through anti-trust laws

A RECENT incident reported in the media last week reminds one that little things can cause catastrophes.

The thrust in tourism is aimed at generating more value added, and the only way to do that is through competition. But an almost three-year-old regulation threatens to take competition in tourism back to the dark ages on a one-way ticket.

In 1995, a regulation was enacted allowing entry of the private sector into the tour bus segment, thus ending a 20-year monopoly of the Jordan Express Tourist Transport (JETT) company, on condition that entrants had to have a minimum capital of JD10 million and a fleet of at least 50 buses. The justification at the time was that only large companies could provide quality products. The substantial investment was a guarantee that the owners of such enterprises would provide such first rate services. The regulation was hailed then as revolutionary and life-saving because it came as a result of the inability of JETT to meet the rise in demand caused by the 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, which seemed to usher in a new era of tourism-based prosperity.

Last week travel agents complained that the three operators, Alpha Co., Petra Co. and JETT, had been artificially pushing the prices up for bus rentals since

September 1997. Furthermore, buses can only be obtained through one office and consumers do not have a choice of the size of the bus they can rent.

When confronted with accusations of monopoly-like behaviour, some of the managers of these companies stressed that they were not a monopoly because they were different companies run by different people. This answer is naïve and ignorant of the underpinnings of the draft anti-trust law.

Under the new law, if authorities determine that an agreement, implicit or explicit, took place among the would-be competitors, then their act would be deemed as reducing competition and would immediately be considered illegal. In fact, if collusion is proved, the three companies would be considered offenders and they would be sued and forced to compensate the travel agents for damages and pay substantial fines. And if they charged the same prices and regulated their outputs, then they have acted as a cartel which would definitely be illegal under Jordan's first piece of anti-trust legislation.

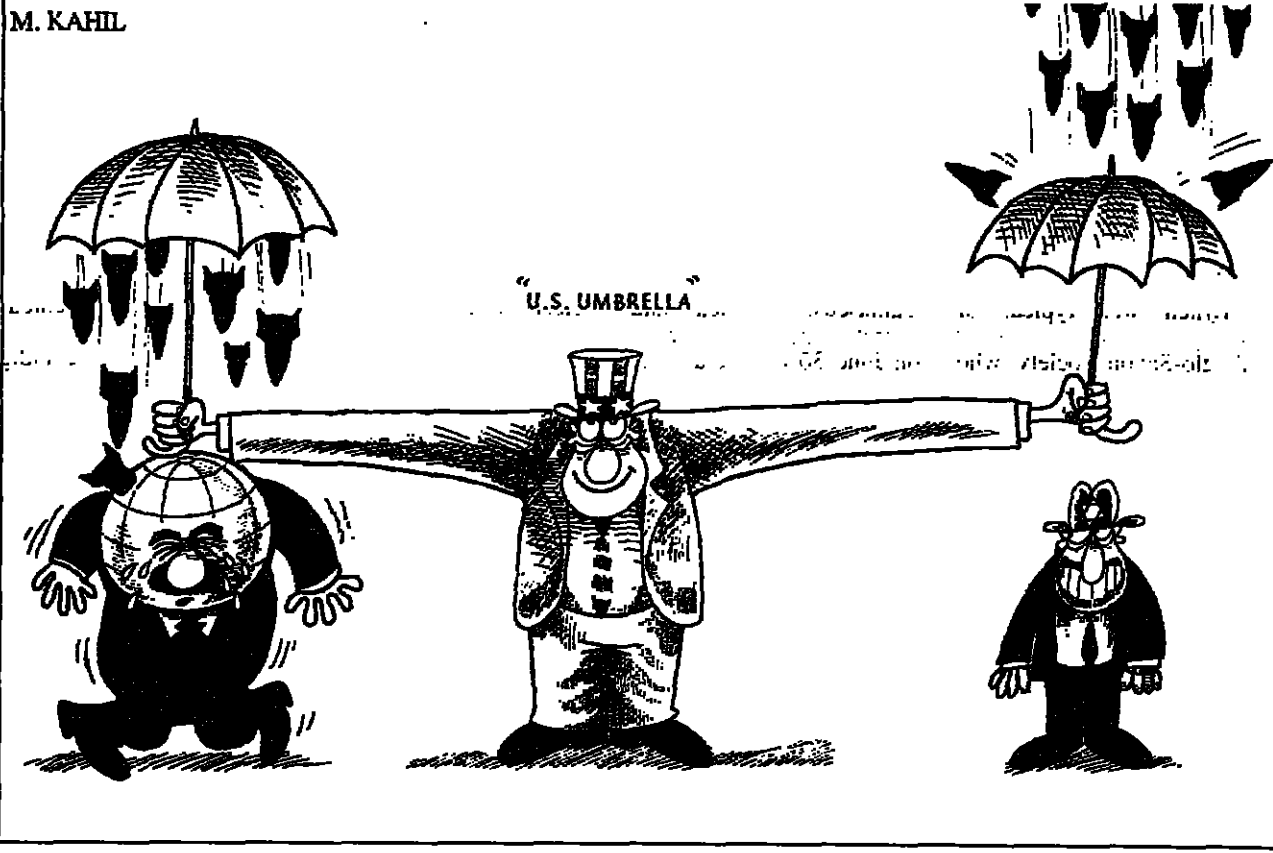
But why did new bus companies not enter the market and compete with the supposed colluders? Logic demands that in the existence of a bonanza, entry would start and continue until the price of the colluders is driven down to the level of the average cost at

which point entry would stop and the cartel would have lost its power to control the market. This did not happen, in spite of the fact that the price was increased by over 30% while the quality of the service declined.

It was the regulation of 1995 that stopped others from entering the market in the first place and may have been behind the incentive to collude. The capital requirements are beyond the means of possible entrants and the 50-bus requirement may have caused the surplus in buses in the first place, as existing competitors could not shed the excess in hard times.

Acts that are similar to the claimed collusive behaviour of the private bus companies will find no mercy when the anti-trust law is passed by Parliament. Therefore, to avoid having courtrooms filled with offenders, in the coming few months businesses and legislators must educate themselves about the nuances of competition and adjust their views, perceptions and understanding of it and learn what it really means. The 1995 regulation may be challenged as anti-competitive. This would be a start in the right direction. The draft anti-trust law should prove to be one of the most, if not the most, important pieces of legislation that has graced the Jordanian legal landscape. Let's hope we won't have to wait too long.

M. KAHIL



Annan is getting scant thanks for doing his Iraq job

By Stephen S. Rosenfeld

WASHINGTON — The way an unapologetic Kofi Annan sees it, the United Nations is doing well the thankless job that the United States and its allies handed it when they let the Gulf war end with a defiant Saddam Hussein still in power.

The United Nations is owed generous international thanks, he believes, for averting the attack on Iraq that the United States threatened just a few weeks ago, when Saddam broke off arms inspections.

An attack almost certainly would not have located the intended special-weapons targets.

It would have unleashed unpredictable regional consequences — and, one might add, left Washington pretty lonely. It would have spelled the end of the international inspections that have located all the Iraqi special weapons so far found. It would have made Saddam Hussein again a hero.

Yet instead of praise, says Mr. Annan (who by now is chortling over the rich irony of it all), the United Nations is reaping political punishment.

He performed, according to the informed consensus, prodigies of U.N. reform in response to a U.S. Congress

that then was unable to cough up the money it had promised to pay American arrears.

His agreement of last Feb. 23 with Saddam Hussein on restoring arms inspections, and some of his words to his host in Baghdad, fed in the minds of some Americans, including me, the suspicion that the United Nations was becoming not President Hussein's enforcer but his protector instead.

It was fair in February to wonder whether Secretary-General Annan was setting up a second inspections system that Saddam would play against the first. It is no less fair in April to note that these anxieties have so far not proved out.

Granted, Saddam Hussein had a world of time to cheat before the second team took the field. That team, although it found nothing in them, got into places the first had been unable to crack. The U.N. inspectors Saddam wanted to fence out remain the working core of the new team. And no one is complaining that the diplomats Mr. Annan added to it have clogged the process.

Mr. Annan insists he fully shares the powerful American interest in not only stripping the special weapons but ensuring that they are not rebuilt. Just as reclaiming Kuwait from Iraq took "men on the

ground," American and other troops, so making inspections also requires "people on the ground," which requires in turn a measure of Iraqi consent.

He stands behind Richard Butler, the Australian chief inspector, who, he says, thinks that "some progress" has been made but that it will take another year, if Iraq cooperates effectively, to provide the necessary certification that Iraq is dirty-bomb-free. Until that happens, he says, the sanctions do not come under review.

Even then, monitoring of suspect sites must go on "indefinitely." That the newly inspected "presidential sites" were found clean provides "no basis" for Russia and Egypt to say that the time for lifting sanctions is already at hand. The Iraqi opening that brought inspectors into those sites was limited and "tactical" and needs to be made continuous and "strategic," he told Saddam.

I ask whether the American culture of trying to bring justice to the likes of Saddam Hussein contradicts the U.N. culture of universal acceptance. Not here, answers Mr. Annan. The key resolutions pressing Iraq to open up and disarm were unanimous.

I report my shock at once seeing the Cambodian mass

murderer Khieu Samphan lounging in a U.N. corridor. They get a seat but are not treated with the same respect, Mr. Annan says.

"Henry told me," says Mr. Annan. That is, Henry Kissinger said that he would not have sent Mr. Annan to Baghdad in February, but that Mr. Annan had done "brilliantly" what the Security Council — including the United States — instructed him to do. Some on Capitol Hill demand the removal of Saddam Hussein, but that was not part of Mr. Annan's Security Council mandate, which was to restore the inspections.

Mr. Annan is visibly troubled by the plight of Iraqi civilians. But he believes that the approved food-for-oil loophole in the U.N. economic sanctions on Iraq can meet the "basic needs" of the population. For its further national requirements, Iraq remains under a regime of sanctions tied to proven disarmament.

Mr. Annan is hopeful nursing the "consensus" he now enjoys with the Clinton administration. Iraq's intention to treat the presidential-site inspections as its last obligation could bring an early test of whether that condition will endure.

— International Herald Tribune

Human Rights

Market economy needs to step on the brakes

By Dr. Waleed M. Sadi

THERE IS a chorus of voices across the world calling for greater and more determined efforts to humanise the forces of market economy. The tempo of these voices picks up each day as the hardships that ensue from raw market economic policies become clearer. What many economists are now suggesting is a market economy with a human face. Without putting men and women as the focal point for development, market economy becomes a theatre for exploitation, poverty, greed and discrimination. What is needed, therefore, are restraints on market economy so that negative social results can be avoided or dealt with. As is, the poverty stricken sectors of many societies, especially in the developing world, which are applying the market economy model are totally neglected and their lot is becoming increasingly unbearable.

Actually this kind of criticism is not without parameters. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC) sets the ground rules for development across the board. There are certain rights belonging to every man, woman and child that must be protected and promoted within the framework of any macro economic policy be it market economy oriented or otherwise. Recent studies have indicated that under "non-petroleum" market economy conditions, the plight of the poor stands to be exacerbated. The gap between the rich and poor is also projected to widen. Corruption and organised crime are features of unfettered market economies. Economic, sexual and political exploitation would be the main results of uncontrolled market economy.

There is therefore a pressing call for deep reflection and stock-taking before countries, especially the poor ones, plunge blindly into market economies. We have seen dire consequences here in Jordan as a result of the economic restructuring that we were talked into adopting and applying. There is no denying that poverty has increased among our midst. Unemployment has also gone up. So has crime and other social ills. Greed drives people away from traditional values. The spiritual dimension of life is reduced to nil only to be preempted by material gains and objectives. That is why we also need to reflect more on the kind of economy that we seem to be pursuing with vigour.

Any economy has to be judged by its consequences. If the outcome of a policy, be it political, social, economic, or cultural, is negative for most of the people, then it needs to be shelved, or amended accordingly. We have become lax about so many positive attributes of our traditional society under the pressure of economic forces. The alarming stories that we now hear about the drug crisis should be a warning to all of us. The number of HIV/AIDS cases is also increasing in the country. So is smoking. Our environment is being threatened, and the quality of our food, water and air is also eroding. Privatisation may indeed exacerbate these negative results unless we apply some brakes to our current national economy. Now is the time to stop and think before the crisis becomes unmanageable.

LETTERS

Breaking stereotypes

To the editor:

I WOULD like to refer to two articles published recently in the Jordan Times.

The first is the report on the proposed Christian-Islamic dialogue. I highly applaud HRH Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal for his call to renew a Christian-Islamic Dialogue. There are a multitude of incorrect stereotypes that perpetuate in the West about the peoples and politics of the Middle East. The issue of depiction and portrayal is something which is being brought up in classes here quite often by both students and teachers.

I think an active, concerted campaign must be initiated to correct the stereotypes and waves of distortion which continue to plague the Arab and Islamic peoples.

The second is the letter written by the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) Bassam Abu Sherif to U.S. Senator Connie Mack. The letter articulates exactly the points which should be emphasised to further Palestinian rights and to combat the often unfair portrayal of the Palestinian people. I think this ties in directly with Crown Prince Hassan's call for dialogue so that finally we can remove stereotypes and project the many positive aspects of Arab and Islamic society.

Marwan Daoud Hanania
 Cornell University
 New York, USA

Land sale assurances

To the editor:

IN RESPONSE to the letter to the editor from the spokesman of the Israeli embassy printed in the Jordan Times on Thursday April 16, stating "we are happy to inform you that no 'draconian laws' have been adopted by the Israeli government in order to control foreign ownership of properties in Israel," I wonder if the gentleman can therefore assure us that Jordanians and Palestinians will be able to buy land and property in Israel, including that land which was illegally seized from them when the Jewish state was created?

Ali Abumishal
 Amman

Feature

Jordan Lt. Lynch

THE VERY special Jordan Valley and Dead Sea region has always attracted pioneers and very special people — including some of the world's first settled peoples over 10,000 years ago, some of the world's first town dwellers over 5,000 years ago, some of the world's first farmers over 4,000 years ago, and some of the world's first major prophets between 400 and 2000 years ago — exactly 150 years ago this month — an American expedition led by Lt. William Francis Lynch of the U.S. Navy.

Lt. Lynch has never achieved the worldwide fame of some of his colleagues who, between 1792 and 1850, explored the North Pacific, the South Atlantic, China, Japan and the Amazon Basin, such as Commodore William Perry and Lieutenant William Herndon. So it is appropriate that Jordan and the United States this month remember and honour the important scientific achievements and feats of personal courage that were accomplished by Lt. Lynch and his 50-strong party, including 20 Americans. They made the first known successful boat journey and detailed survey of the entire Jordan River and Dead Sea region, leaving behind detailed maps and baseline scientific data that remain valid and useful today.

The Amman-based American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR) last week sponsored a brief official ceremony commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Lynch expedition. Held at the new Amman Municipality hall, the ceremony included the unveiling of a plaque presented to Jordan by U.S. Rear Admiral Charles W. Moore, Jr. ACOR's publication of a commemorative booklet on the Lynch expedition by Professor Robert E. Rook of Fort Hays State University in Kansas, a lecture by Dr. Rook, and brief comments by HRH Prince Ra'ad bin Zeid, United States Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan, and ACOR Director Dr. Pierre Bittai.

The booklet, lecture and comments at the ceremony all echoed several themes about the Jordan River Valley's unique combination of natural beauty, wealth of antiquities, profound spiritual associations, and enduring geo-strategic importance. All these reasons — along with the intangible element of personality — prompted Lynch to ask his government for "permission to circumnavigate and thoroughly explore the Lake Asphaltes or Dead Sea."

His request approved, Lynch took command of the U.S.S. Supply, which set off on November 26, 1847 with a cargo of two

Iraq says U.N. sanc

(Continued from page 1)
 (UNSCOM) mandated with dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Mr. Butler, who has said in his report that virtually no progress has been made in the arms inspections over the last six months, has to the Baghdad a clean bill of health that it has dismantled weapons before sanctions can be lifted.
 Iraq says all such weapons were destroyed by the 1991 trade embargo and would be lifted as a step towards ending sweeping sanctions.
 Iraq was warning that the Security Council discussing this month focus on the main issue and lead to lifting of the embargo and

Government preparing to launch 'road maintenance fund' next year

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Public Works Minister Nasser Jawzi said Sunday said the government had agreed to set up a "road maintenance fund" to help generate more income for the maintenance of roads across the Kingdom.

A draft law stipulating the formation of a board and the creation of the fund has been approved by the government. But it will only take effect once parliament endorses it and a Royal Decree enacts it, he told the Jordan Times.

Jordan would normally need at least JD40 million a year — at least two per cent of the total expenditure — to spend on the maintenance of a network of roads worth JD2 billion. The Kingdom has on average allocated between JD8 and JD10 million a year to maintain the network. Such a small amount had led to a rapid degeneration of many roads across Jordan.

"The draft law, expected

to be endorsed next year, will set up a board to draw strategies, policies, planning and expenditure for the maintenance of roads," Mr. Jawzi said.

"The basic work of this board is to prepare for launching this road maintenance fund and the committee is working now on this target," added Mr. Jawzi.

The fund will be managed by the private and public sectors which will have an equal number of board members, he said. It will be headed by the ministry's deputy under-secretary.

Mr. Jawzi said the fund will rely on taxes already in place and will look into new ways to generate income from road users.

He gave no further details but ideas floated last year to toll users on major new highways to ensure income for maintenance, generated a storm of protests from the public.

Mr. Jawzi stressed that road management should shift from building new

roads to improving the existing network which expanded from 895 kilometres in 1950 to 7,519 kilometres in 1997.

"We should spend at least two per cent of the value of roads on maintenance," Mr. Jawzi said. "But we have not been doing that."

Abed Fatah Toukan, President of the Jordan Road Society, claimed the government was mismanaging funds earmarked for roads.

But he said it was using only a fraction of the JD70 million collected in taxes each year for road maintenance, a major move that led to the current deterioration in the situation of the country's roads and highways.

"In the past five years, the government only spent JD7 million on roads while the rest went to cover other expenses not related to road maintenance," he said.

He said the Amman-Mafraq and Amman-Jerash highways were among the major roads that needed

dire maintenance in addition to the Aqaba-Amman backroad used only by trucks.

"Maintenance should not be restricted to roads only," he added. "Funds need to be spent on traffic lights, road signs, cat eyes and other road safety features," he said.

"There should be a comprehensive programme for road maintenance," stressed Mr. Toukan.

He said the society had asked both the Upper and the Lower Houses of Parliament to hold a special session on road safety and maintenance plans.

Mr. Toukan said the random expansion of roads across the Kingdom had resulted in extending the network in an unnecessary manner.

He also said there was no proper coordination between the ministries of transport and of public works on roads.

"We lack a clear cut policy on who is responsible for the roads," Mr. Toukan stressed.

Japan puts forward historic spending plan to rescue economy

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan has unveiled a record 16.6 trillion yen (\$128 billion) spending package to rescue the world's second largest economy from recession.

"To overcome this severe economic condition and achieve a strong economic recovery, we need to carry out drastic measures," the government said in a statement.

Spending directly from government coffers will total 12.3 trillion yen and will be poured principally into public works. Four trillion yen goes into income tax cuts over the next two years, but permanent cuts did not feature.

The steps were intended "to expand domestic demand, strongly push economic structural reform and promote disposal of bad debts," the government said.

"We need to push these measures strongly, in order to put the nation's economy on a smooth recovery track as soon as possible," Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told a special cabinet meeting.

Japan has now spent more than 80 trillion yen, in a string of 11 spending packages, trying to pull its economy back into shape since the bursting of the speculative bubble of the late 1980s.

Despite this, most economists agree Japan was in recession last year. Official growth figures are due out next month.

There are five pillars to the latest plan: public works spending, tax cuts, economic and financial reforms, property market reforms and assistance to the rest of crisis-hit Asia.

Some 7.7 trillion yen will go directly into public works spending, which mainly focuses on roads, bridges, ports and other infrastructure. But the plan lacked specific permanent income tax cuts or cuts to corporate tax, despite growing pressure from business leaders here and U.S. officials to encourage the Japanese to open their wallets and spend.

Japan's Vice Finance Minister Eisuke Sakakibara, wheeled out to explain the package to international media and analysts, said it was the biggest package in history, in the world.

"This is a huge package. This is the largest package we have ever implemented and I have not heard of any package like this in the rest of the world," said Mr. Sakakibara, better known in currency markets as "Mr. Yen."

The government has forecast 1.9 per cent growth for this fiscal year to March 1999 and Sakakibara said this was likely to be achieved following the package.

Finance Minister Hikaru Matsunaga told Japan to buck up after the package. "I hope consumers and companies will have confidence and bright prospects and take positive action," he told a news conference.

But the head of Japan's most senior business organisation said permanent tax cuts were still needed.

"Cuts through tax system reform are needed to wipe out people's concern over the future," said Shochiro Toyota, chairman of Toyota Motor Corp. and chief of the Federation of Economic Organisations (Keidanren).

Many analysts predict the package will add one percentage point to Japan's economic growth for the fiscal year to next March, widely expected to be close to zero despite the official growth forecast.

The government announced earlier it would ease its grip on spending, the hallmark of Mr. Hashimoto's once tight-fisted policies.

A government panel agreed to rewrite a law Mr. Hashimoto put forward just five months ago, which had promised to cut Japan's annual budget deficit, or state debt, to three per cent of gross domestic product by March 2004.

Now the deadline will be moved back two years to March 2006.

Japan's fiscal deficit is expected to reach 529 trillion yen by March 1999.

Some analysts questioned whether the package would have a lasting effect.

"I am just very, very sceptical of the efficiency of using public money to boost private demand," said Andrew Shipley, economist at Schroeder's Japan.

"We have falling return on real assets, unless return on real assets recovers, demand for investment and labour remains weak," he told AFP.

Others were more generous. Ronald Bevaqua, economist at Merrill Lynch Japan, said the package was at the "higher end of expectations."

"It is a hedge-podge of pet projects championed by various elements in the government," he said.

"This package should cause domestic demand to bottom this year."

The government had "done enough to virtually eliminate the risk of a hard landing scenario in the near term."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, APRIL 27, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You could go through a lot of money in a short time if you're not careful. You might do it even if you are careful. The latter is certainly the better option. If you're going to spend it, do it on something that will pay good returns on the investment.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You generally keep a low profile, but it looks like you're stirred up about something. That's OK. You stand a good chance of winning the argument. Encouragement and support from friends also help. You simply outvote this other person. And you can do it without making any enemy.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may be feeling kind of dense this morning, but don't worry. Your brain will clear by this afternoon. If you can manage to schedule appointments for Tuesday and Wednesday, even better. Right now, you could feel like locking yourself in quiet dark place and vegetating.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Meet with associates early this morning. It will be easy to make decisions, and take action. There will be a tendency to get bogged down in details, but not until this evening. A situation requiring the expenditure of jointly held funds will require deliberation before action is taken.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't argue with your boss or teacher. You won't stand a chance. Not only is that person stronger than you are, but he or she seems to have a chip on the old shoulder. There's so much to be done and this person feels responsible for all to it. Offer to help.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Have you been thinking about travelling far from home? If so, this would be an excellent time to make your down payment on the trip. It's also a good time to learn the language. It'll be easier than usual if you start now. Get a tutor from that country to help.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The work you have to do is complicated, and there are decisions to be made. You should be in a good frame of mind, however, and your intuition should be excellent. This evening looks good for travel. Take yourself out for a special treat.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your sweetheart is in a very persuasive mood. This may be a little unusual. Generally, you're the person who's doing the persuading. It's not an altogether unpleasant situation, however. In fact, if you're not careful, it could make you late for work.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have the strength and determination to plow through just about any barrier you run into. The one you're most likely to hit is a mechanical breakdown. Even that you can fix, although it'll take a while. You'd best not plow through that, or you'll be adding to the problem.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You want make marvellous plans that can only be achieving through miracles. It'll be hard to shake you out of that mood for most of the day. This evening, you'll return to a semblance of normalcy. It looks like you could actually get some work done after dinner.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This would be a fabulous day to stay home in bed. If you can't, at least get back there at your earliest opportunity. Meanwhile, think of ways to fix up four place even more. You'll want to entertain at home soon, maybe even tonight. It's about time you got it just the way you want it.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are willing to learn from a strong teacher, someone who is an expert at a skill you admire. If you're learning how to play the guitar, you'd want to sit at the feet of a virtuoso for hours. Devote as much time to that sort of endeavour as possible, even if you have to do your day job first.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

WTO urges India to speed up reforms

GENEVA (AFP) — India must speed up the pace of trade and investment reforms to ensure stable economic growth, the World Trade Organisation has said.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed last year after growing at an average seven per cent since 1993, two years after a major reform programme was launched.

"The recent economic slowdown demonstrates the need for continued and even accelerated reform," the WTO wrote in a trade policy review of India.

The report said more transparency in decision-making, particularly on inward investment, was necessary for India to reach its foreign investment targets.

The WTO pinpointed a number of serious obstacles to continued economic growth in India, including a high public

sector deficit estimated at 8.5 per cent of GDP in 1996/1997.

Heavy subsidies, many aimed at assisting the poor, are a drain on government revenue, crowd out investment and lead to a misallocation of resources, the report said.

Poor infrastructure, particularly in the power and transport sectors, also hinders growth and must be tackled, the WTO said.

The report also urged India to quicken industrial restructuring, particularly to enable loss making enterprises to shut down to release resources for more productive uses.

India has made large strides in trade liberalisation since 1991 "but further steps remain to be taken and are encouraged."

Licensing restrictions on capital goods imports have been removed, while maximum simple average tariffs have been cut from 71 per cent in 1993 to

around 35 per cent currently.

However, substantial variations still exist and the number of tariffs is still fairly high at 22, the report said.

About 32 per cent of all tariff lines, mostly for consumer goods, are subject to licensing, which amounts more or less to an import ban. India has pledged to phase out import licensing restrictions over a six year period.

Also, India continues to control imports and exports through the use of state-trading monopolies.

The WTO stressed India had failed to adopt similar reforms in export subsidies and incentives.

The government argues that India's array of export incentives are intended to compensate for import restrictions. These include income tax exemptions, subsidised credit,

export insurance and guarantees.

The scope of such incentives "increases the possibility of resource allocation," the WTO warned.

Agriculture has remained outside the purview of reforms although it has benefited from some price shifts resulting from manufacturing sector reforms.


Around 70 per cent of India's 929 million population earn their livelihood from agriculture, which contributes over one quarter of GDP, compared to more than 40 per cent for services.

On the services front, the WTO said "significant headway" had been made in liberalising telecommunications. But the banking sector remains fairly closed to foreign investment and the insurance sector is still monopolised by the government.

Other service areas, such as shipping, roads, ports and air are beginning to open up, but outside equity in these fields is low and substantial administrative barriers remain.

Net foreign direct investment in India has surged from an insignificant amount in 1990/1991 to about \$2.7 billion, or 0.7 per cent of GDP in 1996/1997.

Portfolio investment has shot up to \$2.8 billion from zero in the same period.



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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Do something
- 4 Does hard rubbing
- 10 Landlocked African nation
- 14 H. Rider Haggard novel
- 15 Ark's landing spot
- 16 Send out
- 17 Man with a title
- 18 Provocative comedy
- 19 Identical
- 20 Farthest within
- 22 Lincoln or Burrows
- 23 Move emotionally
- 24 After-dinner party
- 25 One of the girls
- 26 Infinitesimal amount
- 27 Copier additives
- 28 Nightclub
- 30 Downhill gliders
- 31 Artificial leather
- 33 Twelve-year-old, e.g.
- 35 Tableau
- 39 Lean to one side
- 43 Hillary's hill
- 44 Quick flashes of light
- 46 Roosevelt coin
- 47 Dawber or Tills
- 49 Colorful Mid-east
- 50 Site of Mont Blanc
- 51 "Silver" author Levin
- 52 Island west of Chile
- 53 Golf-ball holders
- 54 Torn
- 56 Old Testament judge
- 57 Jane
- 58 Interlock
- 59 Functional quill
- 60 Unusable
- 61 Dig farther
- 62 Spanish Mrs.

DOWN

- 1 Lands a helping hand
- 2 Rocky Mountain wind
- 3 Ends of the lines
- 4 One prone to backtalk
- 5 Shipping cases
- 6 Squeal to the screws
- 7 Bathsheba's husband
- 8 Picnic feast
- 9 Cheap ocean passage
- 10 Savior
- 11 Offended
- 12 Defined by borders
- 13 Say again
- 21 Galena and mispel
- 29 Condemnation from the church
- 31 Waxy-skinned
- 32 Had a bite
- 33 in the sky
- 34 Breathed
- 35 Drugged to sleep
- 36 Witch's gaze
- 37 Another name for poster paint
- 38 Urged
- 39 Covers
- 40 Parts of feet
- 41 Pittsburgh player
- 42 Russian empress
- 44 Bulgaria's neighbor
- 45 Weighted down
- 48 Syrup source
- 55 Baby food

Peanuts

HERE'S THE WORLD WAR I FLYING ACE WALKING OUT ONTO THE AERODROME.

AS HE SETTLES INTO THE COCKPIT OF HIS SOPWITH CAMEL, HE SURVEYS THE DARKENING SKY. LIGHTNING FLASHES IN THE EAST.

ONLY THE BRAVEST AND MOST DEDICATED PILOT WOULD FLY IN WEATHER LIKE THIS.

LOOK AT THIS CUTE PICTURE OF A BOY AND HIS DOG IN FRONT OF A FIREPLACE.

WHERE'D HE GET A DOG LIKE THAT?

Andy Capp

OFF!!

GRR-RRR

THE TIMES I'VE TOLD HIM, RUBE, PLAY EVERY GAME AS IF IT'S YOUR LAST - AND YOU'RE A CERTAINLY TO BE SENT OFF IN THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

Mutt'n'Jeff

HEV MUTT, THAT NEW GUY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOWN MY GIRL!

WELL, MURDER, HE'S YOUR STEADY!

IN GONNA TELL HIM TO JUST GO AWAY! HE'S YOUR STEADY!

HINT? SURE, BE DRAGGON-HE'S YOUR STEADY! HE'S YOUR STEADY!

LISTEN YOU BIG CHIMP! HELEN IS MY STEADY! LONG BEFORE YOU CAME! NOW YOU LAY OFF!

THE BIG DOPE! HE LET ME FINISH HINTING!

A.K. - TELL HINT!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

THEY'RE TRIFOCALS. One lens is normal, one is for reading and one helps you see past your spouse's flaws.

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BROIN

LEROD

PHATAY

RUGLAF

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: TEMPO AWARD BROGUE DUPLEX
Answer: Checkers can be this on a rainy day - A "BORED" GAME

THE ARAB POTASH CO. and the firms affiliated with it, have announced that they will acquire a 50 per cent stake in the APC alone, pending approval from the Jordanian government. The APC, located in the Jordanian desert, has been producing potash since 1954. It has a capacity of 1.5 million tonnes of potash annually. The APC has been producing potash since 1954. It has a capacity of 1.5 million tonnes of potash annually. The APC has been producing potash since 1954. It has a capacity of 1.5 million tonnes of potash annually.

REUTERS

The Business

Major Currencies & Commodities			
Currency	USD	DEM	
US Dollar		1.7990	
DE Mark	0.5558		
GB Sterling	1.5680	2.9988	
CH Franc	0.6708	120.58	
JP Yen	0.0075	137.77	
CA Dollar	0.6961	129.19	
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0131	
NL Guilder	0.4939	88.52	
FR Franc	0.1667	0.3998	

Currency	USD	JOD	M
US Dollar		0.7095	
Jordan Dinar	1.4104		
Saudi Riyal	0.2667	0.1891	
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.2806	
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1948	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2773	2.3238	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	
Lebanese/1000	0.68	0.4649	
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	

Oil	Last	Revised
Brent	13.38	13.52
N. Texas	15.10	13.03
Bonny	13.38	13.52
Dubai	12.31	12.53
U.S. Gas	156.00	158.00

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1785	1.1844	
DE Mark	0.3946	0.3966	
CH Franc	0.4743	0.4757	
FR Franc	0.1179	0.1185	
JP Yen	0.5394	0.5421	
NL Guilder	0.3504	0.3522	
IT Lira	0.3991	0.4011	

Bourse	Index
New York	DOW JONES
New York	S&P 500
London	FT-SE 100
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225
Paris	CAC 40
Frankfurt	DAX

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

European strategic partner to join Arab Potash Company in new project

**** THE ARAB Potash Company (APC) and the firms affiliated to it generated a JD16.9 million net profit in 1997 although the APC alone posted around JD19 million profit.** Board Chairman Saleh Irsheidat announced during a press conference. He revealed that sales of 1.5 million tonnes of potash, industrial salt and table salt have amounted to about JD105 million (\$148 million) last year.

Dr. Irsheidat also revealed that an agreement will be signed in the coming few days with a European strategic partner for a potassium nitrate and di-calcium phosphate project. He said the venture, to be sealed during His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Denmark, carries a capital cost of around \$70 million to produce 155,000 tonnes of potassium nitrate fertiliser and 60,000 tonnes of di-calcium phosphate. The chairman expected the project to yield \$61 million in earnings and around \$11 million in net profit. The return on the investment was estimated at about 19 per cent in addition to the creation of 150 job opportunities.

The total assets of the APC increased by 8.6 per cent and the shareholders' equity went up by 10 per cent last year to reach JD340.8 million and JD225 million. The company's cash liquidity was described as good by Dr. Irsheidat as cash at banks stood at JD61.5 million at the end of 1997. The company also maintained a low leverage ratio of 21 per cent with a debt service ratio of 2.4 times. The board of directors is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of dividends at a rate of 20 per cent.

Dr. Irsheidat told the press conference that a total of 1.42 million tonnes of potash were produced last year. "Higher production levels could have been achieved had it not been for the drop in the reserves of the raw material known as 'carnallite', the chairman said. He indicated that output is expected to reach 1.62 million in 1998 and to rise to two million tonnes by the year 2000.

The chairman also expected higher contractual prices in 1998 due to a 15 per cent rise in international demand for potash in 1997. He estimated the world demand at about 40 million tonnes and indicated that the crisis in Asian markets did not affect the demand for potash. Noting that there was a 15 per cent higher consumption in most Asian states, Dr. Irsheidat expected the rise to continue due to increased agricultural areas in India and China, which are the main consumers in the world, in addition to the drive to raise the potash input in fertiliser composition.

Dr. Irsheidat emphasised that the APC marketing plan focuses on maintaining the traditional markets, especially in Asia, through selling in markets with high yields. "Exports have reached 21 countries around the world," he said.

The APC chief concluded by pointing out that construction of a plant to produce 100,000 tonnes annually of industrial potash was completed. He expected the plant to start commercial operations during the second half of this year. The cost of the project amounted to JD7 million and annual earnings are expected to reach \$12 million. The high purity industrial potash is used in industry and for medical purposes (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

Businessmen negative about Palestinian economy

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AFP) — Palestinian businessmen are gloomy about the prospects of the economy in the self-rule territories and are unhappy with the policies of the Palestinian National Authority, according to a survey published Saturday.

The poll by the Palestinian Public Opinion Centre of 81 businesses each employing more than eight people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem found that 59 per cent of bosses "are pessimistic about the future of the Palestinian economy."

A poll by the same organisation in 1995 showed only 40 per cent were negative.

A total of 63 per cent of businesses questioned said they had been forced to make workers redundant.

The bosses expressed little confidence in the economic policies of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority, with just 28 per cent of them saying they believed the authority was capable of developing industry in the self-rule territories compared with 54 per cent three years ago.

And 63 per cent of Palestinian businessmen questioned expressed open dissatisfaction with the economic policies of Arafat's government, with many saying they were unhappy with the high levels of taxation.

Israel also came in for flak, with 84 per cent of those questioned accusing the Jewish state of failing to implement economic agreements agreed in 1994 and 65 per cent deploring the consequences of the repeated Israeli security closures of the Palestinian territories.

Lawyers plan to set up Arab law firm soon

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of 40 Arab lawyers plan to establish an 'Arab law firm' in Amman to nip in the bud what they see as a threat to their competitive edge.

Lawyers from Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Gulf countries, want their new firm to compete with foreign companies which, under the international agreements, will be allowed to open offices in the signatory countries.

According to Attorney Kamal Nasser, in the near future, "the British, the French and other foreign lawyers will compete with us through firms operating in our countries."

The establishment of such firms, "will also reduce employment opportunities for Arab lawyers," Dr. Nasser, who is the legal advisor for the Jordan Kuwait Bank, told the Jordan Times Sunday.

Jordan and the European Union (EU) reached an association agreement last November to create a gradual free trade area by the year 2010.

The agreement, which is expected to be ratified by the parliaments of the 15 EU-member states in 1999, is hoped to encourage foreign direct investments in the Kingdom, facilitate technology transfer and provide free access to EU markets.

Jordan has also opened negotiations to accede to the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The new Arab law firm, according to Dr. Nasser, will publish a periodical magazine and help Arab lawyers acquire fluency in foreign languages and educate them on formulating legal contracts.

"Through this law firm we want to compete and be open to the world," said Dr. Nasser, adding that the lawyers are currently studying the legislative and organisational frameworks in Arab countries ahead of establishing the company, which is expected to open in three months.

European companies to rein in China investment over next two years

SHANGHAI (AFP) — European companies will rein in their investment in China over the next two years before entering a new phase of investment after 2000, a survey showed.

The survey by German management consulting firm Fiducia Marketing Co. Ltd. found that European companies would go through a period of consolidation and restructuring over the next two years.

The companies, which had invested \$1.6 billion at the end of 1997, have committed another \$800 million through this year and next year and planned to invest \$1.9 billion from 2000, a summary of the survey findings showed.

The company sent out questionnaires to some 2,000 European joint-venture companies in China late last year and received 100 responses, largely from the bigger companies.

The respondents were optimistic about the future of business in China, with 75 per cent expecting their revenues to grow by more than 50 per cent by 2000 but more than half the companies said they had overestimated the market potential.

Fifty-four per cent of the companies said it had taken them longer than planned to reach profitability. 21 per cent said their performance exceeded expectations.

Of those companies planning to expand operations in China, more than two-thirds are going for wholly foreign-owned enterprises rather than joint ventures, reinforcing the perception that enthusiasm for Sino-foreign joint ventures had cooled, the report said.

Oman bourse attracts \$1b foreign cash in 1997

DUBAI (R) — Foreigners invested \$1 billion in the Omani stock market in 1997, the bourse's president said in remarks published on Monday.

"Our experience in allowing foreign investments in local shares has proved successful. In 1997, we have succeeded in attracting \$1 billion from 33 nationalities," Mahmoud Al Jarwani was quoted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Al Khaleej newspaper as saying.

He said foreign share ownership in the market accounted for about 11 per cent of total market capitalisation.

Mr. Jarwani, an advocate of a regional bourse, said investors from the UAE accounted for about a third of all foreign investment in Omani shares.

Oman is the Gulf's most open economy and its market is one of the best regulated with many listed firms allowing 49 per cent foreign ownership of their stock.

The Muscat bourse, which gained 141 per cent in 1997, has attracted cash-rich UAE investors seeking to buy into fresh issues. More than 20 new issues are planned this year.

Mr. Jarwani said a long-planned official bourse in the neighbouring UAE would not have a negative effect on the market but could further boost activity through cross-listings.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7990	0.6902	1.4908	131.05	1.4395	1775.00	2.0280	5.9385	
DE Mark	0.5589	1.0000	0.6334	0.8287	72.85	0.7883	986.39	1.2586	3.3338
GB Sterling	1.6660	2.9880	1.0000	2.4637	218.42	2.3532	2587.15	3.3737	9.9335
CH Franc	0.6708	120.59	0.4021	1.0000	87.88	0.9629	1189.84	135.74	4.0210
JP Yen	0.0076	1.3717	0.4574	1.1367	1.0000	1.0853	13.53	154.40	4.5738
CA Dollar	0.6961	1.2916	0.4225	1.0568	1.10	1.0000	1.1451	4.3265	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0131	0.3378	0.8846	1386.12	0.8090	1.0000	11.40	3.3780
NL Guilder	0.4935	88.82	0.2962	73.62	64.68	0.7092	876.33	1.0000	2.9615
FR Franc	0.1667	0.2989	0.1000	24.8487	21.83	0.2394	33.75	33.7500	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7500	0.3770	3.6394	0.3001	3.6727	1625.20	3.4025
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2884	0.5317	5.1331	0.4304	5.1801	2161.20	4.7990
Saudi Riyal	0.2667	0.1891	1.0000	0.1006	0.97	0.8814	0.98	406.70	0.9073
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	0.9475	1.0000	0.95	0.8094	0.94	4045.62	0.9282
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.8038	1.01	419.08	0.9349
Kuwait Dinar	3.2773	2.3236	1.2395	1.2355	11.93	1.204	4988.53	0.9349	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	1.0208	0.9809	0.8831	1.00	415.28	0.9284
Lebanese/1000	0.86	0.4649	2.4588	0.2472	2.3862	0.2001	2.4080	1.0000	2.2309
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	1.1022	0.1108	1.0696	0.0897	1.0794	448.26	

Energy									
Oil	Last	Review							
Brent	13.38	13.52							
WTI	15.10	15.03							
Bonny	13.38	13.52							
Dubai	12.31	12.53							
UL Gas	156.00	158.00							

* JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
DE Mark	0.3946	0.3966							
CH Franc	0.4743	0.4767							
FR Franc	0.1179	0.1185							
JP Yen	0.0394	0.0421							
NL Guilder	0.3804	0.3822							
IT Lira	0.3891	0.4011							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	9064.82	-78.71	-0.86	9160.02	9020.03	9143.33		
New York	S&P 500	1107.9	-11.88	-1.04	1122.81	1104.77	1119.68		
London	FT-SE 100	5883.9	-34.2	-0.58	5933.1	5785.7	5898.1		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16011.24	248.55	1.58	16200.9	15834	15761.7		
Paris	CAC 40	3783.34	-38.79	-1.01	3818.99	3778.82	3822.13		
Frankfurt	DAX	5144.28	-107.18	-2.04	5225.39	5144.02	5251.45		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											AMMAN - JORDAN				
HOUSING BANK CENTER											AMMAN - JORDAN				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY											26/04/1998				
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANSA.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE					
1 350.000	251.000	ARAB BANK	14.5	1.13	10	680	240855	352.00	355.00	3.00+					
2 340.000	1.660	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	14.1	4.05	14	5360	9369	1.75	1.73	-0.02					
3 340.000	1.660	BANK OF JORDAN	12.2	0.00	1	50	67	1.34	1.36	-					
4 2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.7	0.34	1	50	85	1.78	1.69	-0.09					
5 5.990	4.660	THE BOSSING BK.	18.4	3.45	9	2208	12803	5.75	5.80	0.05+					
6 4.180	1.780	JOR. KOWAT BANK	8	0.00	9	1619	2947	1.84	1.82	-0.02					
7 920	590	JOR. GULF BANK	4.0	10.45	2	1250	838	69	67	-0.02					
8 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.1	0.00	39	8853	15727	1.83	1.78	-0.05					
9 1.390	1.020	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	9	0.00	2	11000	11235	1.06	1.02	-0.04					
10 1.400	0.900	BETH. AL-YOL (BETHA)	4.1	0.00	8	4000	3400	85	85	-					
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 247.28	%CHG: +0.52	91	35170	297418
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.9	11.90	4	3775	7761	2.13	2.10	-0.03					
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 121.76	%CHG: -0.15	4	3775	7761
2.240	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.1	5.29	29	9819	20530	2.10	2.08	-0.02					
4.030	1.320	JORD. ELECTRICITY	14.6	4.24	1	100	326	2.48	2.36	-0.12					
1.550	0.960	NATL. PORTFOLIO	41.5	0.00	12	3450	3594	1.06	1.04	-0.02					
1.090	0.900	ZAREKA EDUCATION	16.3	0.00	3	1100	1029	95	93	-0.02					
1.830	1.450	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.28	8	3500	5326	1.53	1.51	-0.02					
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 116.58	%CHG: -0.33	53	17969	30715
4.450	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	16.0	4.07	6	795	2187	2.81	2.70	-0.11					
7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	28.3	3.48	1	250	1438	5.70	5.75	0.05+					
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.7	8.01	30	6382	69961	10.85	11.10	0.25+					
1.460	1.040	MOLEN INDUSTRIES	11.4	6.94	4	850	791	1.40	1.36	-0.04					
2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL CONGR.	9	0.00	6	2742	3288	1.20	1.20	-					
7.350	5.800	JOR. WASTELESS MILLS	8.3	3.15	1	100	635	6.32	6.35	0.03+					
5.740	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	15.0	3.67	103	27400	149512	5.51	5.45	-0.06					
3.400	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	20.7	0.00	4	1900	5380	2.87	2.80	-0.07					
570	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	16.6	0.00	4	3042	1490	49	49	-					
1.620	0.510	NATIONAL TRDS.	9	0.00	1	100	55	56	55	-0.01					
2.240	1.380	UNIV. COMM. BANK	5.13	5.13	7	1650	2325	1.42	1.40	-0.02					
3.000	0.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	27.7	0.00	19	5900	6761	1.16	1.15	-0.01					
1.740	0.530	JOR. SULPH. CHEM.	11.6	0.00	4	2250	1373	62	61	-0.01					
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.0	0.00	1	1000	5485	1.37	1.36	-0.01					
5.540	0.910	UNIV. MED. IND.	13.7	6.98	9	5050	4351	87	86	-0.01					
1.200	0.680	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.3	14.49	5	2500	1705	69	69	-					
1.620	1.350	NATL. CHLORINE	9.8	7.14	1	1000	14000	1.47	1.40	-0.07					
1.080	0.810	JORD. CABLE CO.	11.12	4.41	16	4050	16596	1.92	1.88	-0.04					
1.220	0.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	10.9	0.00	20	36750	39639	1.05	1.09	0.04+					
0.860	0.660	JORDAN STEEL	8.4	9.33	19	8600	6450	75	75	-					
1.740	0.570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	20.9	0.00	13	1300	20840	60	60	-					
1.100	0.720	ARAB ALUM. IND.	20.7	0.00	1	1000	1000	97	1.00	0.03+					
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 108.43	%CHG: -0.24	297	174531	355260
GRAND TOTAL											INDEX: 171.83	%CHG: +0.22	445	231445	691154
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY											26/04/1998				
N 1.050	0.910	EXPORT & FIM. BKK. 75%	17.0	0.00	4	5050	3349	91	92	0.01+					
4.410	0.300	CENTRAL OIL STORAGE	9	0.00	1	350	109	33	33	0.02					
1.340	0.300	JOR. TRADING	9	0.00	20	8200	8200	61	61	-					
0.800	0.660	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	21	85700	22859	76	77	0.01+					
1.620	0.300	JOR. INV. INVEST.	9	0.00	3	4540	1816	41	40	-0.01					
N 1.000	0.720	AL-SHARQ INV. GROUP	9	0.00	100	1000	1000	1.00	1.00	-					
N 2.220	1.050	CENTURY TRADING	1	0.00	1	250	450	1.90	1.80	-0.10					
0.290	0.120	JOR. INDS. MATCH- JENO	9	0.00	1	500	65	13	13	-					
0.600	0.370	ARAB FOOD & MID.	9	0.00	2	2150	969	45	45	-					
0.240	0.070	ARAB INV. TRD.	41.5	0.00	2	20750	7470	37	36	-0.01					
0.530	0.280	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	1	1000	330	33	33	-					
0.750	0.360	NATL. MILLS. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	13	12526	4591	37	37	-					
0.580	0.280	MOHAMED HARMAN. 90%	9	0.00	9	8350	4259	61	61	-					
1.660	0.860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	9.8	8.12	1	1000	1420	1.58	1.54	-0.04					
1.730	0.550	RAZI PHARM.	8	0.00	3	10850	7487	70	69	-0.01					
0.450	0.240	IND. ENG. CABLE CO.	11.6	0.00	2	1000	84	28	28	-					
N 0.990	0.550	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	7	2665	1705	64	64	-					
N 0.710	0.430	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	17	11001	5833	54	53	-0.01					
N 0.950	0.580	ORIENTAL HEATING 75%	9	0.00	2	1165	1165	60	55	-0.05					
N 1.310	1.000	NETWIDAR	9	0.00	17	10800	11281	1.05	1.05	-					
N 1.000	0.750	KIBRAH PRINT CO. 75%	12.8	9.02	1	350	207	84	84	-					
GRAND TOTAL											120	202632	84646		
T : New 12 months high															
S : Stock dividend during the past 12 months															
S : Listed during the past 12 months															
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more															
+ : Negative P/E															
- : Earning is near or W/A for the most recent year															

Bergkamp on fire as Arsenal power four points clear

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal's relentless drive towards the English Premiership title continued on Saturday with a hard-fought 2-0 win at relegation candidates Barnsley.

The victory, courtesy of goals from Dutch duo Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars, fires the Gunners four points clear of Manchester United, who must win at Crystal Palace on Monday to keep alive any realistic hope of a fifth league crown in six years.

Double-chasing Arsenal, who last won the title in 1991, also have the cushion of a game in hand over their rivals.

Bergkamp was the outstanding player on the field and Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger tipped the Dutchman to pick up the Football Writers' Player of the Year.

Bergkamp, already winner of the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award, struck a breathtaking 22nd goal of the season.

Wenger believes the former Ajax and Inter Milan ace should be crowned with the top individual honour in English football.

Asked simply whether Bergkamp should be made Football Writers' Player of the Year, Wenger replied, "Yes."

"It's because he is so consistent. He can score goals and he can bring other people into the game because he is such an exceptional passer of the ball."

Elsewhere, Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish tried to maintain a calm exterior after his FA Cup finalists were dragged back into the relegation dogfight by a miserable 2-0 defeat at Spurs.

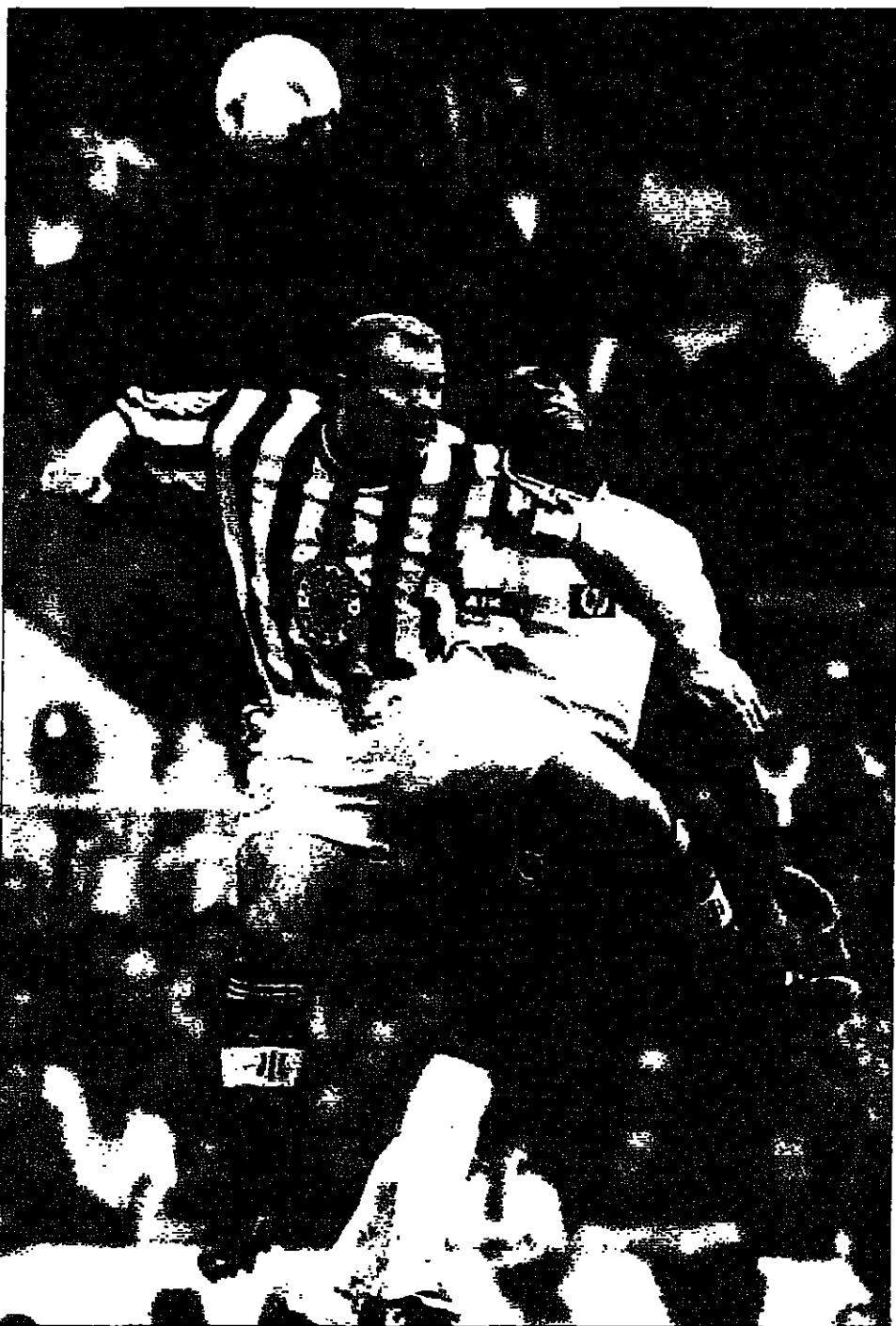
"The situation is no worse than it was," said Dalglish. "We still need a win to feel completely secure but I don't think there was any lack of urgency today."

Spurs boss Christian Gross, who saw his team stay three points clear of third-bottom Bolton and go five points ahead of Barnsley, said: "It was the performance we needed but we know it could still all be decided on the last game."

Liverpool manager Roy Evans promised a summer clear-out of his squad after accusing his players of "throwing in the towel" in a 4-1 defeat at Chelsea.

Liverpool were drawing 1-1 at half-time but simply fell apart in the second-half as Chelsea moved above them into third place.

"We have capitulated and thrown the towel in. It's



Newcastle United and England striker Alan Shearer (L) jumps for the ball against Tottenham Hotspur's Sol Campbell. Tottenham Hotspur eased their relegation problems with a 2-0 win (Reuters photo)

totally out of order," fumed Evans.

"I won't accept that from a Liverpool team. I will get different players if I have to, if they won't take the responsibility and give their all for this club."

Everton stay one point adrift of both Newcastle and Spurs after losing 3-1 at home to 10-man Sheffield Wednesday. Wednesday's Mark Pembroke doubled his tally for the season by blasting a first half double.

A second half Duncan Ferguson header sparked a mini-revival by Everton, but time ran out on them and they are just two points off a relegation spot after Paolo Di Canio hit Wednesday's third.

Bolton striker Nathan Blake blew a hole into Aston Villa's UEFA Cup hopes and then backed his own side to avoid relegation from the Premiership.

The Welsh international killed off a Villa fightback with the decisive third goal in Bolton's 3-1 success — their first at Villa Park for 43 years.

He said: "We have to be confident of getting out of trouble. If that isn't the case, then we might just as well have packed up our bags 10 games ago."

Southampton boss Dave Jones insisted Matt Le Tissier deserves another chance with England after the maverick forward inspired the Saints to a 4-2 win at West Ham.

Le Tissier followed up his midweek hat-trick for England 'B' against Russia with another goal and Jones said: "All Tissi wants is the opportunity to prove himself and he's put in another good performance on the back of one on Tuesday night. He's giving the England manager

something to think about."

Coventry manager Gordon Strachan, meanwhile, urged Glenn Hoddle to do likewise with hat-trick hero Darren Huckerby. Huckerby grabbed three goals in the 3-3 draw at Leeds to provide the England coach with his own timely reminder that Hoddle omitted the player from both midweek international squads.

Strachan said: "People like him can win cups. They definitely can. In the World Cup where the defences are so tight teams need somebody like him."

"I think he can turn a game any time because he has that individual brilliance."

Blackburn depressing end-of-season run continued as they fought out a goalless draw with Wimbledon at Ewood Park.

Lens await final coronation after Bastia demolition

PARIS (AFP) — Lens all but ensured their first peacetime French League title on Saturday when they demolished Bastia 5-1 as nearest rivals Metz won by the only goal in Toulouse to remain in the hunt by their fingertips.

Holding a two-point advantage at the start of play on the penultimate day of the season, Lens enjoyed the perfect start when Tony Vairelles put them ahead in the 14th minute.

Vairelles nodded home on the rebound after an initial effort following a Stephane Ziani corner was brilliantly beaten out by Bastia keeper Eric Durand.

Yohan Lachor had already hit a swirling effort against the post inside ten minutes to show Lens' intentions and after the opener, Smicer almost made it 2-0 but Durand stopped his full-blooded effort as the one-way traffic continued until the break.

But the jam-packed Felix Bollaert stadium was shocked into silence four minutes after the restart, when Bastia equalised.

Lubomir Moravcik curled over a freekick from the left and Stephane Perez rose to nod the ball inside Guillaume Warmuz's near post.

Within minutes, however, Smicer was on hand to fire home a low volley from the edge of the area after Sikora centred and put Lens back on the title track.

And Tony Vairelles put the issue beyond doubt with the third on the hour, cutting in from the left before unleashing an unstoppable shot across and into the net.

Anton Drobnjak rubbed in Lens' superiority with the fourth from the penalty spot on 70 minutes for his 14th of the season before Vairelles clipped in to complete his hat-trick in the final seconds. Vairelles said afterwards: "It's the first time I have ever scored three goals."

Since the start of the season I wanted to do something good because I was injured last year. "I don't think people had confidence in me at the start of the season, but I think I answered those people tonight."

Frederic Meyrieu was Metz's hero in their 1-0 win as he blasted home a deflected free-kick from 30 yards for his sixth of the season in the 58th minute. Shortly afterwards, French international striker Robert Pires skated through and drew the keeper before seeing his skidding effort blocked on the line as he just failed to make it 2-0.

Metz keeper Lionel Letizi kept Metz ahead with a fine one-handed save from a Thierry Moreau freekick. Lens should now wrap up the title at Auxerre in a fortnight, where they need only a draw, while Metz have a tough match at home to UEFA Cup hopefuls Lyon.

Marseille, who drew 0-0

with Strasbourg, missed an early chance to go ahead against Strasbourg when Fabrizio Ravanelli blasted a spotkick over the bar after Titi Camara had been fouled in the box.

Last week's 2-1 defeat at Auxerre had ended Marseille's faint hopes of grabbing their first title since they made it four on a roll in 1992 before their fall from grace in the wake of a match-fixing scandal.

Bordeaux meanwhile hammered the final nail of relegation into Chateauroux's coffin and qualified for the UEFA Cup. Johan Micoud slamming the ball high into the net after Lilian Laslandes' shot was blocked in the opening minutes in a 1-0.

Cannes are also down after losing 2-0 at Lyon. Daniel Bravo saw a late header hit the post but he reacted smartly to crack home the rebound for the first and he hammered home a second from close range to make the points safe and keep Lyon on course for Europe as they rose to sixth.

Paris Saint Germain dropped to eighth as they bowed 2-1 to outgoing champions Monaco. Early pressure by the hosts finally paid off as Pierre Ducrocq lobbed Fabien Barthez in the 24th minute to give the Parisians the lead. But Nigerian striker Viktor Ikpeba evaded two defenders to fire the equaliser, his 14th of the campaign

for the principality side.

And David Trezeguet secured the points for Monaco with a last-gasp header following an Ali Benarbia free-kick from wide on the right. Paris Saint Germain have already qualified for the European Cup Winners' Cup as they face Lens, already in the Champions League, in next week's cup final.

Guingamp slid nearer the drop as they bowed 2-1 at home to Le Havre, for whom Nicola Huysmans scored his fourth of the season for the visitors after a mazy run and cross by Vikash Dhorasoo in the 33rd minute.

Although Daniel Moreira equalized for Guingamp four minutes before the break, Cyrille Pouget grabbed the winner two minutes from time. Steve Marlet was on target for Auxerre, still in the UEFA Cup frame, as they drew 1-1 at Montpellier, for whom Laurent Robert opened the scoring from close range.

Nantes and Rennes parted 1-1, Samba N'Diaye scoring his fifth goal of the season for the hosts, turning smartly in the box to shoot home right-footed, while Yoann Bigne curled home a free-kick ten minutes after the break to level. Lorient and Nancy are assured of promotion from division two.

Chang meets Courier in Clay Court final

ORLANDO (AFP) — Top-seeded American Michael Chang advanced to his second straight final at the \$315,000 U.S. Men's Clay Court Championships Saturday, dispatching Sweden's Mikael Tillstrom 6-3, 6-4.

Chang will look to snap a nine-month title drought when he meets third-seeded compatriot Jim Courier, who beat Romanian Andrei Pavel 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. Since winning this tournament last year, Chang's only other ATP Tour title came at the Legg Mason Classic in Washington last July.

Ranked as high as second in his career, the 26-year-old Chang has suffered 11 early-round defeats since his victory here last year and his ranking has dropped to 12th. After battling through a recent knee injury, Chang needs to win this event Sunday or his ranking will fall further.

In February, Chang was a finalist at the Kroger St. Jude in Memphis and reached the semi-finals of the Sybase Open in San Jose, California. He will be gunning for his 32nd career ATP Tour title on Sunday. Courier, a former world No. 1, is currently ranked 57th in the world and was appearing in his first ATP Tour semi-final since Beijing last October.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Anton wins London marathon

LONDON (AFP) — World champion Abel Anton won the men's race of the London marathon — his fourth win in five races — after surging past Morocco's Abdelkar El Mouazzazi half a mile from the end on Sunday. The Spaniard was just two seconds outside the course record, finishing the 26 miles in two hours seven minutes and 56 seconds. El Mouazzazi, who had led for much of the second half of the race, held on for second place ahead of last year's winner Antonio Pinto of Portugal, who was third. Olympic champion Josia Thugwane of South Africa pulled out early with hamstring problems.

Oehara wins jockeys' invitational

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Takashi Oehara rose Air Phantom to win the 2,780-metre steeplechase here Sunday, the second of the International Jumping Jockeys' Invitational. Air Phantom timed three minutes 10.1 seconds to beat Ricky Maund of Australia, who rode on A.P. Brave to cross the line three and a half lengths behind. Adrian Garraway of Australia, the winner of the first race Saturday, finished seventh on Mold Ginka, and Garrett Cotter of Ireland ninth on Mejiro Spark, while Brendan Powell of England scratched. On Saturday in Kyoto, Ibuki Dolphin with Garraway in the saddle coasted to a half-length victory in the 2,910m steeplechase, ahead of Admirer Ruby ridden by Japan's Mitsuaki Hayashi and Powell's Dandy Uranus. Cotter was fifth on Erimo Jupiter, while Maund was thrown by Long Multi.

No Union Jack logo for Australians

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia will march behind a flag containing the Union Jack but their athletes will not use the flag on team kit at the 2000 Games, Australian Olympic chief John Coates said Sunday. Coates, who two days earlier said Australians did not want the British monarch Queen Elizabeth II to open the Games, stressed the Australian flag containing the Union Jack had not been used on team kit since the 1960 Rome Olympics. He said a sponsor's logo, which the team has used for the last two Games, would very probably not include a Union Jack. "A survey of athletes has revealed a majority would be uncomfortable with it," Coates said.

German official slams ticket 'chaos'

AACHEN (AFP) — German Football Federation President Egidius Braun on Saturday lambasted the distribution system for the World Cup which he said had caused chaos. "UEFA has already learned lessons from this chaos and wants to avoid a similar situation for the European Championships in 2000," said Braun, 73. Braun said he believed German fans had had a particularly harsh deal with an allocation of just 4,500 for each of their three first round group matches.

FINA plan could end Klim's attack on Spitz record

SYDNEY (AFP) — Mark Spitz's Olympic record of seven gold medals achieved at the 1972 Munich Games is unlikely ever to be surpassed if the swimming federation, FINA, get their way and bring in semi-finals.

Jacques Rogge, chairman of the Sydney Olympic Evaluation Commission, said on Sunday FINA had asked for semi-finals to be brought in for the Sydney Games.

"There seems to be a fairly widely-held view this would give swimmers a better chance than the present system, whereby only the fastest eight of 50 or so competitors qualify for the final," he said.

The Australians and Americans were known to be opposed to the idea, which by adding an extra heat per event would kill off Australian Michael Klim's hopes of matching Spitz.

Klim won three gold and two silver medals at the Perth world championships in January.

Australia's head coach, Don Talbot believed the existing format was already too punishing for a seven-gold medal assault.

If semi-finals are included then B finals would be dropped.

The International Olympic Committee Executive Board meeting here next week will discuss the semi-final plan with FINA, who are also here for the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations meeting.

CAF Cup

Uninspiring Zamalek held 0-0 at home

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egyptian football pride took another blow this weekend when CAF Cup favourites Zamalek could only draw 0-0 in Cairo with Sudanese club Al-Hilal.

Zamalek dominated the second-round clash without seriously troubling goalkeeper Ahmed al-Nour and had a narrow escape near the end when striker Anas al-Nour fluffed a good scoring chance.

The uninspiring Egyptians, who have been African champions a record four times, were

reduced to inaccurate, long-range shooting and must fear the worst when they visit Khartoum in two weeks.

Egypt won the African Nations Cup in Burkina Faso two months ago and their clubs were expected to make a big impact this year in the championships.

However, Champions League favourites Al-Ahly made a shock first-round exit after fielding a reserve team against Coffee of Ethiopia and cup winners Ismailia were eliminated by unknown Eritreans Red Sea.

There was also a surprise in the Champions League with Manning Rangers of South Africa defeating Power Dynamos 2-0 in Zambia through goals from Simon Makhubela and Keryn Jordan.

Former Cup-winners Cup holders Power Dynamos were more impressive than Rangers in the first round and had a considerable advantage in African experience.

Utalii edged 1995 CAF Cup and 1997 Cup-winners Cup holders Etoile du Sahel of Tunisia 1-0 in the Kenyan town of Nakuru

with Elkanah Swaka scoring the second-half winner.

Cup-winners favourites Esperance of Tunisia also lost in East Africa, losing 1-0 to Uagadans Express with Lazarus Mbabazi on target after 14 minutes.

Africa Sports National of Ivory Coast, who lifted the trophy in 1992, outclassed giantkillers Dragons Ouege of Benin 3-0 with first-half goals from Charles Dago, Yacouba Camara and Seydou Mariko.

1st Division F Jazireh b title-d

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Jazireh Sunday beat Al Ahli 5-1 to temporarily regain the lead atop the standings of the First Division Basketball Championship playoffs.

Al Jazireh only managed a 27-23 first half lead which they later expanded and held onto as they needed to win the match to stay in contention for the title.

The titleholders led 43-35 and 51-37 before Al Ahli reduced the gap to 51-41 but could not get any closer.

The match was one of the worst both teams played this season ending in a very low score compared to 75-63 in the first leg playoff match.

Provided Al Orthodoxy beat Al Ahli, Al Jazireh will now need to beat Al Orthodoxy by any score in their May 5 match to retain the title.

Team	P	W	L
Jazireh	13	11	2
Orthodoxy	12	11	1
Ahli	13	6	7

Coulthard San Marin

MOILA (AFP) — David Coulthard nursed his McLaren home to win the San Marino Grand Prix and end his world championship hopes here on Sunday.

Leading from start to finish, Coulthard looked to be trouble as Michael Schumacher in his Ferrari tried to reel him in over the closing laps.

From a 23-second gap between the two rivals, the 26-year-old Scot saw the German close to within five seconds but even Coulthard could not grab the dramatic last lap victory.

Britain's Eddie Irvine in the second Ferrari held off Jacques Villeneuve to finish third.

Villeneuve's team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen was 10th while Jean Alesi took 11th spot for Sauber.

Former champion Damon Hill was forced to retire just one lap from the finish when lying eighth for a while. Johnny Herbert also finished early when the Sauber developed mechanical problems.

Coulthard's team-mate Mika Hakkinen, leader in the season's title race, was 12th with gearbox trouble.

It was the all dominating McLaren-Mercedes team's mechanical problem of Coulthard's gearbox that cost him the win.

San Marino was the 10th round of the 17-race season.

Next up is the Italian Grand Prix on May 3.

Al Jazireh only managed a 27-23 first half lead which they later expanded and held onto as they needed to win the match to stay in contention for the title.

The titleholders led 43-35 and 51-37 before Al Ahli reduced the gap to 51-41 but could not get any closer.

The match was one of the worst both teams played this season ending in a very low score compared to 75-63 in the first leg playoff match.

Provided Al Orthodoxy beat Al Ahli, Al Jazireh will now need to beat Al Orthodoxy by any score in their May 5 match to retain the title.

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TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	CRYING FREEMAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Yusra & Ilham Shahin ... in DANTELLA (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	The biggest cinema production TITANIC Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI - KAMANANA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	ABDOUN TITANIC & One of Walt Disney's best movies FLUBBER	ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC & SCREAM 2	STARTING APRIL 6TH Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

League	2	NY Mets
isco	2	Milwaukee
	4	Florida
	4	Montreal
	8	Philadelphia
11	11	Atlanta
es	3	Chicago Cubs
	4	Pittsburgh
League	3	Cleveland
	8	Oakland
	5	Detroit
	7	Tampa Bay
Sox	8	Toronto
	11	Kansas City
	8	Seattle
ockey League		
playoff		(series best-of-seven)
ference		Quarterfinals
	4	Montreal
1-1)		
2		Quarterfinals
1		Los Angeles
skethall Association		
playoff games		(all series best-of-seven)
ference		
92		
series 2-0)		Cleveland

Iran detains British national for spying

TEHRAN (AFP) — A British national has been arrested in Iran suspected of spying on military installations, the Iranian newspaper Jumbouri-Islami reported Sunday.

The paper, citing an unidentified intelligence service official, said the Briton, identified as Robert Gavin, was arrested "recently" while he was filming army installations in a military zone in Iran's Kurdistan region.

He had confessed to being an "important" member of the British foreign secret service M16, it said.

Mr. Gavin held a tourist visa and said he was a journalist for the BBC, said the newspaper, which is close to Islamist circles in Iran.

During a one-week interrogation, Mr. Gavin "admitted being involved in espionage activities in Iran and several Arab countries," it said.

A spokesman for the British Foreign Office said Britain was not aware of his arrest. "We have not been informed. We have to establish what the facts are."

Iran's official IRNA news agency reported the news, citing the newspaper, but said it had received no official confirmation on the report.

The Iranian Kurdistan, in the

north-west, is a relatively unstable region bordering Iraq and Turkey, and is highly militarised and under close surveillance.

The report came one week after British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook revealed in an unprecedented break with traditional secrecy that M16 had thwarted Iranian attempts to procure British nuclear technology.

In a speech on Thursday, Mr. Cook said M16 and the GCHQ communications monitoring agency had "tracked Iran's nuclear weapons programme, and have enabled us to disrupt Iranian attempts to procure British technology."

Relations between Britain and Iran are already strained over the 1989 death threat against British author Salman Rushdie over his book "The Satanic Verses" which the Islamist authorities said was an insult to Islam. Britain is represented in Iran by a charge d'affaires and not an ambassador, which is the case for all other members of the European Union.

Chaos relations between Britain and Iran's Islamist regime were marked by the arrest between 1985 to 1991 of British businessman Roger Cooper, who was accused of spying.

Mr. Cooper's release coincided with the freedom of an Iranian student from a London jail over his alleged role in an arson attack on a library selling "The Satanic Verses."

Iran detains another European national, German businessman Helmut Hofer, whose is condemned to death for alleged sexual affairs with a Muslim Iranian woman. His case is presently being reviewed by an appeal court.

The Briton's reported arrest could pose another hurdle to improved relations between Iran and the European Union.

The European Union launched a so-called "critical dialogue" with the Islamic Republic several years ago in an effort to encourage it to moderate its policies.

But it was ended in April of last year after the Tehran regime was implicated by a German court in the 1992 murder of dissidents in Berlin.

In February, however, the European Union decided to resume ministerial contacts with Iran, encouraged by the new mood created after the election in May of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami.



Hassan Turk, 62, a Palestinian refugee in Jordan, sells sweets at the Hussein Refugee Camp — known to Palestinians as the Camp of Return — in Amman Sunday. Mr. Turk, from Lid in what is now Israel, fled his home town when he was 12 years old to escape the 1948 conflict over the establishment of the state of Israel in British-mandated Palestine. Mr. Turk says that 50 years on, he still dreams of returning to his homeland (Reuters photo)

Britain rejects use of force for release of hostages in Yemen

SANAA (AP) — The British ambassador has asked that Yemeni security forces not use force in their attempt to free a British family held hostage here, a Yemeni government source said Sunday.

Yemen has been sending reinforcements since Saturday to north-eastern Yemen — where English teacher David Mitchell, his wife Caroline and their 14-year-old son Ben are believed to be held — in preparation for an offensive to free them, said the source at the Yemeni interior ministry.

He spoke on customary condition of anonymity. British Ambassador Victor Henderson met Sunday with Yemen's Parliament Speaker Abdullah Al Ahmar and expressed concern that a member of the Mitchell family

could get hurt if security forces attacked the kidnappers' hide-out, said the source.

The Mitchells are being held somewhere near the town of Knoum, 160 km north-east of the capital Sanaa. Last week, government troops cordoned off the area to keep the kidnappers from moving the family.

Negotiations for the release of the hostages, who were abducted April 17, have stalled because the kidnappers are insisting on a ransom. But the government is refusing to pay the undisclosed amount of ransom because it does not want to appear to be giving in to the abductors' demands so as not to encourage more kidnappings.

Mr. Henderson told Mr. Al Ahmar that Britain agreed with Yemen's refusal to pay ransom

but insisted on trying to free the hostages through continued negotiations, said the source. The Britons' release had appeared imminent Thursday when Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said his government had negotiated their freedom.

The Mitchells were kidnapped by five tribesmen from the Bani Dhasbyan tribe while travelling from the port city of Aden to Sanaa, where Mrs. Mitchell and Ben were to catch a flight home. They were in Yemen for the Easter holiday.

Mr. Mitchell, 48, teaches English at the British Council in Aden. On Thursday, Mr. Mitchell sent a letter to Yemeni authorities through the British Embassy, saying they were being treated well. He also

appealed to the Yemeni government to get them freed quickly.

In addition to the ransom, the kidnappers have also demanded that the government build more roads in their north-eastern Dhamar province. Also, they want the government to return a four-wheel drive vehicle that was seized from them last month. Large swaths of Yemen are virtually lawless and ruled by armed tribesmen who kidnap foreigners to demand money or press for concessions from the government. The hostages are rarely harmed and are often treated as guests.

The government announced late last year that it was stepping up security for tourists, but the kidnappings have continued.

First Dog, role model worldwide

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The White House puppy is now a role model for pets all over the world thanks to President Bill Clinton's sense of social responsibility and a couple of snips from a veterinarian. "The president, believing it was the responsible thing to do, arranged to have Buddy neutered last weekend," announced White House spokesman Michael McCurry. The chocolate Labrador Clinton got in December actually doesn't get a chance to run around much, but McCurry said animal advocates wanted Buddy to set an example because millions of unwanted pets are euthanised every year. "Buddy is happy and doing well and is still very much an affectionate dog," he said, adding however that the vet preferred to "remain anonymous."

Banderas to star in Ataturk film

ANKARA (AP) — Spanish film idol Antonio Banderas has been tapped to star in a movie about Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey. Banderas accepted the role after reading the script based on a 1964 book by British historian Lord Kinross. Turkey's Milliyet newspaper reported. The late Sir Lawrence Olivier's movie producer son, Tarquin Olivier, is heading the project.

German First Lady declared 'cook of the year'

FRANKFURT (AFP) — German President Roman Herzog's wife, Christiane, has been declared the country's "cook of the year," receiving a \$55,000 prize for publishing a book of family recipes. The cash, however, is only the cream on the pudding for the German first lady, who has already seen 300,000 copies of her "Guest at Christiane Herzog's Home" sold since it came out in 1996 and has been the star of a television series showing her cooking her stovetop wonders. Perhaps already well-fed from her other revenue streams, Herzog has promised that the prize money will go to charity.

New York's mayor gets photography show

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has begun a second career — photographer. The mayor's handiwork, including shots at City Hall, from a police helicopter and at a water main break, go on exhibit next month at the Leica Gallery in Greenwich Village. The gallery will show 23 of the mayor's photos from May 8 to June 13 and will sell 50 prints, all signed by the mayor, for \$500. The money will go to New Yorkers for Children. Giuliani, 53, has said he's working on a children's book called "What Will You Be?"

Ice Cube wants to get back to rapping

NEW YORK (AP) — Rapper-actor-director Ice Cube wants to get back to what got him there. "What I love is rap music," he says in the May issue of The Source magazine. "It's what I've been doing since I was 14 years old." The former member of N.W.A. has never stopped rapping, despite a turn to acting that includes appearances in such films as "Boyz n the Hood," "Higher Learning" and "Anaconda." He recently made his directorial debut with "The Players Club." "Hip hop gives me the freedom that movies will never give me," he said. "With movies you've got so many suits putting their two cents in."

Iran denies trying to buy British nuclear technology

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Sunday denied British government accusations that it had tried to procure British nuclear technology, saying the "baseless" charges were a bid to divert attention from controversies at home.

"These accusations are baseless. Iran's position is clear. — we are opposed to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction," said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said last week that M16 had thwarted Iranian attempts to procure British nuclear technology.

In a speech on Thursday, Mr. Cook said M16 and the GCHQ communications monitoring agency had "tracked Iran's nuclear weapons programme, and have enabled us to disrupt

Iranian attempts to procure British nuclear technology."

But Mr. Mohammadi said Mr. Cook's remarks were an "attempt to divert attention in Britain from such controversial issues as the nuclear waste in Georgia and the developments in Scotland."

A controversial consignment of uranium from the former Soviet republic of Georgia was delivered to the Dourney nuclear complex in Scotland under heavy police guard on Friday.

Mr. Mohammadi also accused British secret services of supplying Israel with weapons technology and "turning the Zionist regime into a main threat in the region."

But the spokesman made no mention of the reported arrest in Iran of a British national on spying charges.

Jumbouri-Islami newspaper

said Sunday that the Briton, identified as Robert Gavin, was arrested "recently" while he was filming army installations in a military zone in Iran's Kurdistan region.

He had confessed to being an "important" member of the British foreign secret service M16, the paper said.

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During a one-week interrogation, Mr. Gavin "admitted being involved in espionage activities in Iran and several Arab countries," it said.

Relations between Britain and Iran are already strained over the 1989 death threat against British author Salman Rushdie over his book "The Satanic Verses" which the Islamist authorities said was an insult to Islam.

Libya seeks Saudi support to end 6-year-old sanctions

RIYADH (AP) — In a surprise visit, a Libyan envoy met with Saudi King Fahd seeking Saudi Arabia's support for lifting U.N. sanctions against Libya, a Libyan diplomat said Sunday.

At Saturday's meeting, Juma'a Al Fazzani, Libya's minister for Arab Unity, also gave King Fahd a letter from Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi, the agency said. The contents were not disclosed.

Mr. Al Fazzani was to return home Sunday, the diplomat said. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Libya has repeatedly scorned the oil-rich Gulf kingdom for being "colonised" by the United States. Saudi Arabia is a major American ally in the Gulf and allows U.S. troops to be based on its soil.

The sanctions were imposed in 1992 to try to force Libya to surrender two men suspected in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am passenger jet over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Peace Bloc rejects Israeli state jubilee funding conditions

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli government panel organising Israel's 50th anniversary celebrations reluctantly agreed to fund an event organised by a left-wing peace movement, but the group on Sunday rejected conditions attached to the grant.

Under strong pressure from Israel's supreme court, the jubilee committee decided at a meeting late Saturday to give \$54,000 to the Peace Bloc to organise a rally on Thursday night, the anniversary of Israel's creation according to the Hebrew calendar.

But the committee president, Doron Shmueli, a right-wing nationalist and ally of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, insisted the funds could only be used to finance an event "of a national and not a political nature" and which "focuses on the positive and not the negative."

The Peace Bloc lodged a protest in the supreme court Sunday against the conditions but the appeal was turned down and the group subsequently declined the money. "These conditions are humiliating, we refuse to accept the government funds," said Naftali Raz, a spokesman for the group, one of the more left-wing factions in the Israeli peace movement.

Mr. Raz said the Peace Bloc would organise its own counter-demonstration Thursday at the construction site of a controversial new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

The supreme court had strongly criticised Mr. Shmueli's committee for refusing to give money to peace groups even though it provided militant Jewish settlers in the West Bank city of Hebron with \$100,000 to organise a jubilee celebration.

Mr. Shmueli also decided over the weekend to include references to Rabin in the programme for the main jubilee event to be held Thursday evening in Jerusalem.

The movement A Whole Generation for Peace headed by Rabin's son Yuval called last week for a boycott of the ceremony because it made no reference to Rabin's peace legacy or his November 1995 murder by a right-wing Jewish militant.

Rabin's family accuses Mr. Netanyahu of contributing to a fierce campaign of anti-government and anti-peace demonstrations which led up to the assassination.

Mr. Netanyahu was elected to power in May 1996 on a platform to slow down or halt the Oslo peace process launched with the Palestinians by Rabin's Labour government.

Holocaust survivors recall less-than-warm reception in Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — When it was over, the survivors of the Holocaust found themselves alone and in tatters among the ruins of Eastern Europe. Many came to Israel, to be with the Jews who were building a state, a safehouse.

But the welcome they expected was not what they got.

Jewish pioneers fighting for independence in pre-state Palestine were preoccupied with survival and had little time for compassion.

The veterans were busy creating a new image of the rugged Israeli as farmer and fighter, and the survivors, often pale and emaciated

from years in Nazi camps, didn't fit the mould.

"It was a time when Israel was in a mood of looking down at everything that was Jewish, especially what was considered Jewish weakness," said Israeli historian Tom Segev, who has written several books on the impact of the Holocaust on Israeli society.

Survivors were often called "sabon," or soap, a direct reference to one of the items the Nazis made from victims' bodies, said Danny Brom, director of research at AMCHA, a survivors' support group.

On the eve of the country's 50th anniversary later this month, many are pous-

ing to take a deeper look at the experience of the Holocaust survivors — children without parents, wives without husbands, fathers without sons — who poured into the new state.

Many came alone and were sent to communal farms or state-run boarding schools. While the young state did what it could to ensure physical survival, it was not ready to help heal the wounds.

Mr. Brom said many of the survivors didn't speak about their terrible experiences then, in part because they were busy finding jobs, getting married and having children. "People were involved in building

new lives," he said.

Shoshana Farago, 64, who immigrated as an 11-year-old girl in 1945, three months after being liberated from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, recalled a sense of shame.

"It was embarrassing then to be a survivor. We were ashamed and treated badly," Mrs. Farago, a grandmother of five, said, tears welling in her clear blue eyes. "All they kept asking us was 'How we could go like lambs to the slaughter?'"

For Mrs. Farago and her sister Sara Atzmon — who was 13 when rescued from Bergen-Belsen — it was decades before they could

openly confront their past.

"We never talked about it at home. I didn't have the strength to tell my own children that I was a survivor," Mrs. Atzmon, 66, said at the opening of a Tel Aviv art show focusing on her memories of the camp. "One day they just overheard me telling a housekeeper about the war, that's how they knew."

Mrs. Farago said she and her husband Mordechai, who survived Buchenwald, only recently began participating in the annual Holocaust Memorial Day. "For many many years we just couldn't watch the TV, it brought back too much pain," she said.

During the 24-hour commemoration — this year it began at sundown Wednesday — businesses, restaurants and theatres close down, the nation stands in silence during a two-minute siren and TV stations broadcast programmes about the Holocaust in which six million Jews perished.

Only in recent years, as the country matured and the threats to its existence lessened, have Israelis begun to look more openly at the Holocaust.

The survivors, who number about 360,000 today, became heroes of a different sort: Benay Navon, a child at Auschwitz, became

Israel's ambassador to Germany; Zvi Eyal, a child survivor from Holland, became chief of surgery at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital; Meir Lau, Buchenwald's youngest survivor, is Israel's chief rabbi.

Mrs. Atzmon became an army soldier and later married, farming with her husband and putting her memories on canvas. For her, Israel is synonymous with the word "life."

"I have forgiven the state for the way it treated us," she said. "There was so much going on then, and even today, no one can truly understand what we went through."

مكتبة الامم